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THE

TRAGIC DRAMA OF THE GREEKS

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THE TRAGIC DRAMA OF THE GREEKS

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CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAP. I. EARLY HISTORY OF GREEK TRAGEDY 1

§ 1. Introductory 1
§ 2. The Worship of Dionysus 4
§ 3. Early History of the Dithyramb 13
§ 4. Arion and the Dithyramb 16
§ 5. Later History of the Dithyramb 23
§ 6. The Innovations of Thespis 26
§ 7. Character of the Thespian Drama 29
§ 8. Career of Thespis 36
§ 9. Choerilus, Pratinas, and Phrynichus 39

CHAP. II. AESCHYLUS 46

§ 1. His Life 46
§ 2. Improvements in Tragedy 60
(1) The Structure of the Aeschylean Drama . . . 61
(2) General Tone 65
(3) The Manner of Representation 67
§ 3. Selection and Treatment of the Plots 70
§ 4. The Characters 76
§ 5. The Language 80
§ 6. Religious and Moral Ideas 86
§ 7. The Trilogy and Tetralogy 96
§ 8. The Extant Plays 99
(1) The Supplices 101
(2) The Persae 103
(3) The Septem 106
(4) The Prometheus 109
(5) The Oresteia 114
§ 9. Reputation among the Ancients 121

PAGE

CHAP. III. SOPHOCLES 126

§ 1. His Life 126
§ 2. Improvements in Tragedy 137
§ 3. Selection and Treatment of Plots 143
§ 4. The Chorus 151
§ 5. The Characters 156
§ 6. The Language 161
§ 7. Religious and Moral Ideas 168
§ 8. The Irony of Sophocles 174
§ 9. The Extant Tragedies 179
(1) The Antigone 182
(2) The Ajax 186
(3) The Trachiniae 188
(4) The Electra 191
(5) The Oedipus Rex 192
(6) The Philoctetes 194
(7) The Oedipus Coloneus 198
§ 10. Reputation among the Ancients 200

CHAP. IV. EURIPIDES 204

§ 1. His Life 204
§ 2. General Characteristics 217
(1) Innovations in the spirit of Tragedy 218
(2) Modern Criticisms 226
(3) Influence of Rhetoric and Philosophy 233
§ 3. Choice and Structure of Plots 237
§ 4. Innovations in the Form of Tragedy 245
§ 5. The Chorus 251
§ 6. The Language 256
§ 7. Moral and Religious Ideas 261
§ 8. Political and Social Opinions 273
§ 9. The Extant Plays 280
(1) The Rhesus 284
(2) The Alcestis 285
(3) The Medea 289
(4) The Heracleidae 291
(5) The Hippolytus 292
(6) The Hecuba 295
(7) The Supplices 295
(8) The Andromache 297
(9) The Hercules Furens 298
(10) The Troades 300

PAGE

(11) The Electra 301
(12) The Helena 303
(13) The Ion 304
(14) The Iphigeneia in Tauris 305
(15) The Orestes 309
(16) The Phoenissae 310
(17) The Bacchae 311
(18) The Iphigeneia in Aulide 314
(19) The Cyclops 316
§ 10. Reputation in Ancient Times 317

CHAP. V. FORM AND CHARACTER OF GREEK TRAGEDY 322

§ 1. General Characteristics 322
§ 2. The Subjects 328
§ 3. The Characters 333
§ 4. Unity of Structure 337
§ 5. Treatment of the Plot 344
§ 6. Formal Divisions of Greek Tragedy 348
(1) The Dialogue 348
(2) The Lyrics 353
§ 7. The Language of Greek Tragedy 363
§ 8. The Versification 370
§ 9. Symmetry of Form 377
§ 10. The Satyric Drama 389
§ 11. The Titles of Greek Tragedies 395

CHAP. VI. LATER HISTORY OF GREEK TRAGEDY 403

§ 1. Introductory 403
§ 2. Minor Poets of the Fifth Century 405
(1) Ion 406
(2) Achaeus 408
(3) Agathon 409
(4) Tragedy in Families 412
(5) Other Tragic Poets 416
§ 3. Tragedy at Athens in the Fourth Century 419
(1) Rhetorical Poets 423
(2) Literary and Philosophical Poets 426
(3) Tragedy in Families 429
(4) Dionysius the Tyrant 432
§ 4. The Extension of Greek Tragedy beyond Athens . . 434
§ 5. Tragedy at Alexandria 439

PAGE

§ 6. Character of the Post-Alexandrian Tragedy 443
(1) The Composition of New Tragedies 443
(2) The Reproduction of Old Tragedies 447
(3) The Chorus 451
§ 7. Greek Tragedy in Italy 454
§ 8. Final Extinction of Greek Tragedy 457

APPENDIX I 463

APPENDIX II 473

INDEX 483

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Early representation of Dionysus 11
Later representation of Dionysus 12
Gem depicting the death of Aeschylus 60
Bust of Aeschylus 60
Statue of Sophocles 137
Bust of Euripides 214

THE
TRAGIC DRAMA OF THE GREEKS

CHAPTER I.

EARLY HISTORY OF GREEK TRAGEDY.

§ 1. *Introductory.*

In tracing the origin and growth of the primitive drama, the point which impresses itself most forcibly upon the attention is the gradual and tentative character of its early progress. The invention of the dramatic art, like many other human discoveries, so far from being achieved by sudden inspiration, was the result of a protracted series of innovations and experiments, of which the eventual tendency was for a long time far from manifest. The hesitating manner in which the ancient poets proceeded with the work of development, and the slowness with which they gradually came to realise the varied capacities of the new form, may at first sight cause surprise. Theatrical performances have now become so familiar to the mind, that we are apt to regard them as an obvious and natural contrivance, and to underrate the merit of those by whom they were originally discovered. But the evidence of history throws a different light upon the question. It shows us that the notion of a dramatic representation, or, in other words, the notion of

unfolding a story by means of the mutual conversation of actors, without any aid from narrative, is not one which readily presents itself to the human imagination. It is true that the love of mimicry and imitation is one of the most universal of instincts, and that mimetic performances of some kind or another have been found to exist in almost every part of the world. But to evolve out of these primitive elements an orderly and continuous drama was a work of the greatest creative genius. The magnitude of the task is proved by the fact that it has never been fully and satisfactorily accomplished except by a single nation—the Greeks. It is from the Greeks that every drama, both ancient and modern, which has attained to anything like perfection of form, is ultimately derived. Other nations have occasionally, by their own unaided efforts, made some approximation towards a like result; but unless they have come under Hellenic influence, either directly or indirectly, their drama has never advanced beyond a rudimentary stage. A brief survey of existing dramatic literatures will exemplify the truth of this statement.

To take the eastern nations first. Both the Indians and the Chinese, it is well known, possess a national drama which dates from remote antiquity. But the plays of the Chinese, though apparently of native growth, are so childish and elementary in their general character, that they can scarcely be regarded as belonging to the same species as the productions of the European stage. The Hindu dramas, on the other hand, while superior to the Chinese in literary merit, have far less claim to rank as indigenous creations. None of them belong to an earlier date than the first century before Christ. But long before that period the Hindus had been brought into contact with the influences of Greek civilisation by means of the Hellenic dynasties established in the north-western districts of India. The effect of that contact may still be traced in the style of their early architecture; and it is not improbable that the expansion of their drama was due to the same original cause. In confirmation of this view it has been pointed out by recent scholars that the most ancient of the Indian plays

contain various features which are not strictly Oriental, but recall the characteristics of the Greek theatre[1].

When we turn to the nations of the west the case is still clearer. The Roman drama in its regular form was a mere exotic borrowed directly from the Greek. Before this importation the native genius of the Italians had produced, it is true, certain farcial entertainments, such as the Mimi and the Atellanae. But these rude mixtures of song, pantomime, and extempore raillery and repartee, bore little resemblance to plays in the strict sense of the word.

Through the agency of the Romans the memory of the classical drama was handed down to mediaeval times, and so gave birth to the various national theatres of modern Europe. For many centuries, indeed, during the confusion caused by the inroads of the barbarians, and the downfall of the Western Empire, all theatrical performances were abandoned. But the tradition never entirely disappeared. The class of actors, though their regular occupation was gone, still continued to survive in a degenerate condition, as 'ioculatores' or wandering players and minstrels, and kept alive some faint reminiscence of the dramatic art. At the same time among the learned ecclesiastics there were always a few who possessed an acquaintance with the productions of the Roman stage. Copies of Plautus and Terence, preserved in monasteries and religious houses, found occasional readers and admirers, and were sometimes used as models for composition by the monks and nuns. When, therefore, towards the close of the Middle Ages the clergy began to exhibit their Mysteries and Miracle Plays, and thus laid the foundations of the modern drama, these spectacles were not altogether an original conception of their own. The idea of representing the events of Scripture in dramatic form was derived from classical example by two separate lines of tradition, one professional, and due to the

[1] See Windisch's pamphlet, Der griechische Einfluss im indischen Drama (Abhandlungen des Orientalisten-Congresses, Berlin, 1882). The whole question of the influence of the Greeks upon Indian civilisation is discussed in Mahaffy's Greek World under Roman Sway, pp. 20–37.

strolling players, the other literary, and preserved by the ecclesiastics.

It appears then from the above survey that the theatre of the Greeks is the ultimate source of every dramatic literature which really deserves the name. Among the Greeks themselves the first species of drama to be developed into perfect shape was tragedy. Hence the history of Attic tragedy, apart from its own intrinsic interest, is a subject of which the literary importance can hardly be overrated. Further than this, as a scientific study it possesses certain advantages over the history of the modern theatre. The dramas of the different European nations have been exposed from the very first to such complexity of influences, each of them acting and reacting on the other, and all alike being dominated at various times and in various degrees by classical example, that their course of necessity has been somewhat fitful and irregular. The tragic drama of the Greeks, on the other hand, is one of those branches of art which have been allowed to unfold themselves in a purely spontaneous manner, without any admixture of foreign elements. Being wholly a native product, each successive phase in its career follows naturally from that which went before. Its progress from birth to maturity, and from maturity to decay, resembles one of the evolutionary processes of nature; and the task of tracing its progress throughout these various stages has much of the attractiveness which accompanies an inquiry into some phenomenon of natural science.

§ 2. *The Worship of Dionysus.*

In most countries art and literature are originally the offspring of religious enthusiasm; and the early poets and sculptors find their highest inspiration in singing the praises, or in fashioning the likeness, of the divine being. The Greek drama forms no exception to this rule. The cause to which it owed its origin was the fervent zeal of the worshippers of the god Dionysus, amid whose sacred festivals it developed and grew to maturity, and to whose honour it was consecrated.

The whole of its early history is so intimately associated with Dionysus, that a brief account of the god and of his cultus will be necessary for the due understanding of that which follows[1].

Dionysus, though he eventually became one of the most important of Greek divinities, appears to have been introduced to the knowledge of the Greeks at a comparatively late period. He is mentioned only four times in Homer, where he occupies an insignificant position, having no place among the aristocratic circle of Olympian gods[2]. Herodotus also states that his name was learnt by the Greeks 'much later' than the names of the other deities[3]. Various traits in his cultus would seem to show that it came originally from the semi-Greek tribes of Asia Minor, such as the Phrygians and Lydians[4]. And the legends about the opposition which it encountered in Thrace and Thebes, on the occasion of its first introduction, point to the conclusion that it was brought from Asia Minor along the northern shores of the Aegean, and so passed southwards into Greece.

As to the attributes of Dionysus, he was essentially, in the original conception, a rural god—the god of trees, and plants, and fruits, and vegetable produce of various kinds. The vine, with which his name is chiefly associated, was not his only gift to mankind. All fruits of a soft and mellow nature, such as are fostered by moisture and damp, were supposed to be under his care[5]. For this reason he was called the Fruitful, the Leafy, and the Flowering[6]; and also the Benefactor and the

[1] My principal authorities on the subject of Dionysus have been the articles in Roscher's Lexicon der Mythologie, Preller's Griechische Mythologie, Baumeister's Denkmäler, Smith's Dictionary of Mythology, and Collignon's Manual of Mythology (translated by Miss Jane Harrison).

[2] Hom. Il. 6. 132; 14. 325; Od. 11. 325; 24. 74.

[3] Herod. 2. 52.

[4] Thus the dithyramb, the Dionysiac hymn, was regularly composed in the Phrygian style of music (Aristot. Pol. 8. 7). The orgiastic character of the Dionysiac worship in various parts of Greece also points to an Asiatic origin. See p. 9.

[5] Plut. de Is. et Osir. c. 35 ὅτι δὲ οὐ μόνον τοῦ οἴνου Διόνυσον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσης ὑγρᾶς φύσεως (i.e. moist vegetation, as opposed to corn and similar produce—the ξηρὰ τροφή of Diod. 4. 3) Ἕλληνες ἡγοῦνται κύριον καὶ ἀρχηγόν, ἀρκεῖ Πίνδαρος μάρτυς εἶναι λέγων Δενδρέων δὲ νομὸν Διόνυσος πολυγαθὴς αὐξάνει κ.τ.λ. Hence his title of Δενδρίτης (Plut. Symp. 5. 3).

[6] Εὐανθής (Athen. p. 465), Δασύλλιος (Paus. 1. 43. 5), Εὔκαρπος, Ἄνθιος κ.τ.λ.

Counsellor, who taught mankind the cultivation of vineyards and orchards[1]. The spring was of all seasons of the year the one most sacred to his divinity. It was he who in the spring-time aroused the earth from its long winter torpor, inspired it with warmth, and life, and vigour, and clothed it with vegetation[2]. Hence he figured in the imagination of the Greeks as the representative of the productive forces of nature; and the phallus, the symbol of generative power, was always a conspicuous element in his worship[3].

But it was chiefly as the god of the vineyard, and the inventor of wine, that he was held in honour by mankind, and ranked among the greatest benefactors of the human race[4]. By his priceless gift he dispelled pain and sorrow, and inspired mirth and cheerfulness, and was therefore saluted with the title of Deliverer and Liberator[5]. Under his genial influence it was supposed that savage natures were tamed, and violence and hostility replaced by gentleness and harmony; and this effect of his power gave rise to various legends. His car was said to be drawn by panthers and lions; the wild natives of the forest followed in his train; the barbarous Indians were pacified by his presence, and submitted to the dominion of law[6].

Wine being also an incentive to dance and song, Dionysus, like Apollo, was a patron of poetry and music[7]. But the poetry and the music inspired by these two deities differed widely in character. In the hymns and paeans of Apollo, which were set to the stately melody of the harp, the prevailing feature was symmetry of form and grave earnestness of tone. The Bacchic poetry, on the other hand, preferred the more lively accompaniment of the flute, and admitted the utmost freedom and irregularity in rhythm, language, and sentiments. Every diversity

[1] Εὐεργέτης (Hesych. s. v.), Εὐβουλεύς (Plut. Symp. 7. 9. 7).

[2] Pindar, frag. 53; Aristoph. Nub. 311–313.

[3] Schol. Aristoph. Acharn. 242.

[4] Diod. 4. 3.

[5] Plut. Symp. 1. 1. 2 πάντων μὲν ὁ Διόνυσος Λύσιός ἐστι καὶ Λυαῖος. Corp. Ins. Att. 3. 240 Διόνυσος Ἐλευθερεύς. Aristid. 1. p. 49 οὐδὲν ἄρα οὕτως βεβαίως δεδήσεται, οὐ νόσῳ, οὐκ ὀργῇ, οὐ τύχῃ οὐδεμίᾳ, ὃ μὴ οἷον τ' ἔσται λῦσαι τῷ Διονύσῳ.

[6] Baumeister's Denkmäler, art. Dionysische Symbole. Diod. 2. 38; 4. 5.

[7] Hence his title of Διόνυσος Μελπόμενος, Corp. Ins. Att. 3. 278.

of feeling found expression: rapid transitions from gaiety to pathos, and from coarse merriment to passionate enthusiasm, were regarded as appropriate qualities in compositions consecrated to the god of wine[1]. This licence and variety, and this exemption from all restraint, are the causes which rendered the Dionysiac choral poetry the most favourable material for the development of a new form of art, and which enabled it to give birth to such dissimilar creations as tragedy, comedy, and satyric drama.

In his various wanderings and adventures Dionysus was generally accompanied by a motley troop of mythical beings, who represented in various ways the vigorous forces of nature, and the passions and emotions of the human mind, and were therefore suitable companions for the god of vegetable fruitfulness, and of wine and poetry and music[2]. Foremost among these followers were the Satyrs, the inhabitants of forest and mountain—rude beings, half-human half-animal in shape, with shaggy hair, pointed ears, and shanks like a horse or goat. In disposition they were a cowardly and sensual race, but at the same time lively, frolicsome, and good-humoured; and the quaint and fanciful names which they bore, such as Ivy, Revel, Fun, Lustful, and Dithyramb, may remind one of Oberon's fairy followers, Cobweb and Mustard Seed, Mistress Squash and Master Peascod[3].

The Bacchantes were hardly less constant in their attendance upon the god[4]. They are represented in ancient paintings as

[1] Plut. de Ei apud Delph. c. 9 *καὶ ᾄδουσι τῷ μὲν* (to Dionysus) *διθυραμβικὰ μέλη παθῶν μεστὰ καὶ μεταβολῆς, πλάνην τινὰ καὶ διαφόρησιν ἐχούσης· μιξοβύαν γάρ, Αἰσχύλος φησί, πρέπει διθύραμβον ὁμαρτεῖν σύγκοινον Διονύσῳ· τῷ δὲ* (to Apollo) *παιᾶνα τεταγμένην καὶ σώφρονα Μοῦσαν . . . καὶ ὅλως τῷ μὲν ὁμοιότητα καὶ τάξιν καὶ σπουδὴν ἄκρατον, τῷ δὲ μεμιγμένην τινὰ παιδιᾷ καὶ ὕβρει καὶ σπουδῇ καὶ μανίᾳ προσφέροντες ἀνωμαλίαν κ.τ.λ.* Aristot. Pol. 8. 7 *πᾶσα γὰρ βακχεία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ τοιαύτη κίνησις μάλιστα τῶν ὀργάνων ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς αὐλοῖς.*

[2] The description of the followers of Dionysus, as they appear in ancient sculptures and vase-paintings, is taken mainly from Preller's Griechische Mythologie, pp. 592, 593, and Collignon's Manual of Mythology, p. 244 foll.

[3] The satyrs are frequently depicted in vase-paintings with names such as Κισσός, Οἶνος, Κῶμος, Χορός, Γέλως, Κρότος, Διθύραμβος, Ὕβρις, Συβάς κ.τ.λ. See Gerhard's Griechische Mythologie, p. 513.

[4] They were called Βάκχαι, Μαινάδες, Θυιάδες, and Λῆναι.

girls with flowing garments and dishevelled hair, dancing to the flute and clashing their cymbals, or flourishing the magic wand of Dionysus. Their names, like those of the Satyrs, were playful personifications, such as Dance, Song, Drink, Merriment, and Comedy[1]. The Sileni, with their gross and hairy bodies, and their drunken and lascivious features, resembled Satyrs advanced in years, and formed the elderly portion of the troop. Centaurs, as the representatives of animal force and vigour, and Pan, as the god of rural life, also followed in the train of Dionysus. Various allegorical figures are likewise often to be seen, in works of art, as frequenting his court. Autumn, a matronly woman, offers him the fruits of the earth upon a dish; Peace stands by his side, with the horn of plenty in her hand; and Love and Desire, little winged boys, hover round his head. The Muses, the Hours, and the Graces occasionally join themselves to the group.

Such then were the principal features in the popular conception of Dionysus and his followers. To turn next to the Dionysiac festivals[2]. Our concern is mainly with those held in Attica, which were of two kinds. One of these was celebrated in the spring-time, when the wine of last year was ready for drinking, and when the earth was awakening to new life, and the trees and plants breaking forth into foliage, under the fostering influence of Dionysus. The other was placed in winter, after the termination of the labours of the year, to celebrate the completion of the vintage, and the ingathering of the fruits[3].

[1] Χορεία, Μολπή, Εὐθυμία, Μέθη, Κωμῳδία κ.τ.λ. See Gerhard l. c.

[2] On the festivals of Dionysus see Mommsen's Heortologie, and Smith's Dict. of Antiquities, art. Dionysia.

[3] At Athens the original spring festival was the Anthesteria, or Feast of Flowers (Thuc. 2. 15), in which the principal ceremony was the Pithoegia, or formal opening of the wine-casks. But in later times a second spring festival was added —the City Dionysia—which eventually became the more splendid of the two. The winter festival at Athens was the Lenaea, or Feast of the Wine-Press, which was celebrated in the beginning of January.

In the country districts of Attica the only Dionysiac gatherings which we hear of in the historical period are the winter festivals, or Rural Dionysia, held in December throughout the various townships. But there can be no doubt that in early times, before the government of Attica had been centralised in Athens, the country districts had their spring festivals also, corresponding to the Athenian Anthesteria. Possibly the

These twin festivals, held each spring and winter throughout the Attic villages, were the original home of the Greek drama. In character they were simple rustic gatherings, drawn together in honour of the god who blessed the labours of the countrymen, and made the earth fruitful and productive. The proceedings began with a procession to the altar of Dionysus, where a goat was sacrificed. A country maiden led the way, adorned with golden ornaments, and bearing on her head the sacred basket, containing an offering of cakes, a chaplet of flowers for the victim, and a knife for the sacrifice. Other people followed with rural gifts, such as grapes, figs, and jars of wine. The phallus, the universal symbol of Dionysus, was carried aloft. During the sacrifice dances and songs were performed in honour of the god of the vineyard; then came the country sport of dancing upon greased wine-skins; and the day concluded with general drinking and merriment[1].

In the Attic festivals of Dionysus, with their pastoral simplicity of tone, the Bacchic worship appears to have lost most of its oriental character, and to have been modified into conformity with Hellenic tastes[2]. But this was not the case in every part of Greece. In many places the Asiatic origin of the cultus showed itself without disguise, and especially in Phocis and Boeotia, at the 'trieteric festivals,' which were observed every alternate year along the slopes of Parnassus and Cithaeron[3]. The spirit of these celebrations was one of wild and ecstatic violence. They were held in winter, during

institution of a second spring festival at Athens had something to do with the disappearance of similar festivities from the country calendar.

[1] Plut. de cupid. divit. c. 8; Aristoph. Acharn. 237-279; Cornutus de nat. deor. p. 217 F.

[2] Mr. Bather, in his interesting article on the Problem of the Bacchae (Hellenic Journal, vol. xiv, part 2), suggests a different theory (pp. 244-246). He supposes that the worship of Dionysus in Greece was not derived entirely from oriental sources, but that there existed from early times an indigenous cult of a wine and vegetation deity, with whom the oriental Dionysus was afterwards identified. He believes that rustic celebrations such as those of the early Attic Dionysia represented the primitive Greek form of the worship; and that the orgiastic rites which prevailed in other parts of Greece were a later development, due to the introduction of the Asiatic Dionysus, and his identification with the old Greek god.

[3] Probus on Verg. Georg. 3. 43; Soph. Ant. 1126.

the night time, upon the mountain ridges[1]. The ministers were chiefly women. Clothed in fawn-skins, like the Bacchantes, and with snakes in their hair and blazing torches in their hands, they rushed along the heights in a state of delirious fury, clashing their cymbals, blowing their flutes, and making pretence to hunt the wild animals, to tear them in pieces, and to devour the raw flesh[2]. This orgiastic mode of worship, with its oriental frenzy and mysticism, seems to have found little favour among the Athenians; and no trieteric festivals were ever established in Attica. Hence it will be unnecessary, in discussing the origin of the Attic drama, to take into consideration this particular phase of Dionysiac enthusiasm.

Before leaving the subject of Dionysus it may be interesting to supplement and illustrate the preceding description of his cultus by some account of the manner in which he was represented in works of art[3]. His outward appearance, as there portrayed, differed very considerably at successive periods; and the variety of type, in this case as well as in that of the other gods, shows a gradual progress from rude simplicity to grace, dignity, and refinement. The earliest statues of Dionysus were mere pillars of stone, with the head of a bearded man, antique in style and expression, carved upon the top. Various adornments, such as chaplets of ivy and vine-leaf, strings of fruit, and branches laden with country produce, denoted the rustic nature of the god[4]. In course of time the rudeness of this first conception was partially modified, the stone pillar being replaced by a stiff kind of figure with hands and feet; but the general presentment remained very much the same. The specimen which is here given (fig. 1), with its pointed beard, and formal and elaborate ringlets, exhibits the usual characteristics of early Greek art[5]. These primitive representations of the deity were never entirely discarded by

[1] Ovid, Fast. 1. 293, 294; Eur. Bacch. 485.

[2] Eur. Bacch. 145–147; Phot. v. νεβρίζειν; Catull. 64. 256–264.

[3] On the representation of Dionysus in works of art see especially Baumeister's Denkmäler, art. Dionysos.

[4] See the example given in Baumeister, vol. i, p. 432.

[5] From Gerhard's Trinkschalen und Gefässe, Taf. 5.

the Greeks, being endeared to the hearts of the rural populace by long habit and association; and they are frequently to be met with in sculptures and paintings, even during the latest period, side by side with the more refined productions of subsequent generations[1].

FIG. 1.

The first considerable change in the figure of Dionysus seems to have been due to foreign influence. The face, as it now appears, is still that of a bearded man, but more effeminate

[1] Hence the origin of the ancient opinion that there were two gods of the name of Dionysus—an older one with a long beard, and a younger one with smooth features. Diod. 4. 5 δίμορφον δ' αὐτὸν δοκεῖν ὑπάρχειν διὰ τὸ δύο Διονύσους γεγονέναι, τὸν μὲν παλαιὸν καταπάγωνα . . . τὸν δὲ νεώτερον ὡραῖον καὶ τρυφερὸν καὶ νέον.

in features. The hair is confined with a female head-band, instead of a crown of ivy; the dress consists of a woman's flowing garment; the attitude is lively and unconstrained[1]. This androgynous representation of the deity no doubt came from Asia Minor, being brought into Greece at a later date than the original introduction of the Dionysiac worship. It was apparently adopted by Aeschylus in his Lycurgeia, where the half-male half-female appearance of the god, with his 'sword in one hand, and his looking-glass in the other,' excites the ridicule of Lycurgus[2].

The final class of statue, which eventually prevailed over the others, represented Dionysus as a handsome and beardless youth, such as he is described in the Homeric hymns, where this altered conception of his figure and appearance occurs for the first time[3]. The new type was fashioned into perfect artistic form by Praxiteles, whose famous Dionysus became the model of a whole series of similar sculptures, of which numerous specimens are to be found in the various museums[4]. In these works (fig. 2) the god is depicted in the full bloom of youthful beauty[5]. His face, with its soft and slightly effeminate features, has a pensive, half-bewildered half-inspired expression, emblematic of the influence of the god of wine and poetry. The interval between this graceful and idealised creation and the rude images of antiquity is significant of the intellectual and artistic progress of the Athenians, and offers an exact parallel to that contemporary development which transformed

[1] See the specimen given in Lenormant's Dictionnaire des Antiquités, p. 682.

[2] Aristoph. Thesm. 134 foll., *καὶ σ', ὦ νεανίσχ', ὅστις εἶ, κατ' Αἰσχύλον | ἐκ τῆς Λυκουργείας ἐρέσθαι βούλομαι. | ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννις; τίς πάτρα; τίς ἡ στολή; | τίς ἡ τάραξις τοῦ βίου; τί βάρβιτος | λαλεῖ προκωτῷ; τί δὲ λύρα κεκρυφάλῳ; | τί λήκυθος καὶ στρόφιον; ὡς οὐ σύμφορον. | τίς δαὶ κατύπτρου καὶ ξίφους κοινωνία;*

[3] Hymn. Homer. 7. 3–6 *νεηνίῃ ἀνδρὶ ἐοικὼς | πρωθήβῃ· καλαὶ δὲ περισσείοντο ἴθειραι | κυάνεαι, φῶρος δὲ περὶ στιβαροῖς ἔχεν ὤμοις.* The description in Euripides (Bacchae 453–458) is of a similar kind.

[4] The statue of Praxiteles is described at some length by Callistratus (Statuae, 8) *ἡϊθέου σχῆμα μιμούμενος· οὕτω μὲν ἁπαλὸς ὡς πρὸς σάρκα μεταρρυθμίζεσθαι τὸν χαλκόν . . . ἦν δὲ ἀνθηρός, ἁβρότητος γέμων, ἱμέρῳ ῥεόμενος . . . ὄμμα δὲ ἦν πυρὶ διαυγές, μανικὸν ἰδεῖν· καὶ γὰρ τὸ βακχεύσιμον ὁ χαλκὸς ἐνεδείκνυτο.*

[5] The illustration is taken from Monumenti Inediti, vol. ii, tav. 51. The statue was found in Hadrian's villa.

FIG. 2. DIONYSUS

the rustic songs of the Attic villagers into the tragedies of Sophocles and the comedies of Menander.

§ 3. *Early History of the Dithyramb.*

It has been shown that the Attic festivals in honour of Dionysus were of two kinds, held in spring and winter respectively. The winter festivals are associated with the birth of comedy[1]. At these meetings, on the occasion of the sacrifice, a 'comus,' or band of revellers, marched along in procession, carrying aloft the phallus, and chanting songs to Dionysus, which were therefore called 'phallic songs[2].' In the intervals between the choruses the leader of the procession amused the spectators with a display of impromptu scurrilities, either in the way of monologue, or of dialogue between himself and the other singers[3]. This mixture of song and satire by the 'comus' eventually developed into the choruses and dialogues of 'comedy[4]'; and although in course of time the comic drama underwent such transformation in style and structure as to lose all traces of its origin, still the characteristic features of the primitive phallic songs were long retained at Athens in the parabasis of the old comedy—a curious interlude, in which high-flown lyrical passages alternated with humorous spoken addresses on passing events.

The tragic drama, on the other hand, is to be traced back to the spring festivals of Dionysus, when the country people met

[1] Schol. Plat. Rep. 394 C *κωμῳδία ... πρότερον μὲν ἐφ' ἱλαρότητί τινι καὶ καρπῶν συγκομιδῇ γιγνομένη.* Hence comedy was sometimes called *τριγῳδία*—the 'must-song,' or 'song of the vintage.' It always continued to be the principal feature at the Lenaea, the Athenian winter festival (Attic Theatre, p. 37).

[2] Aristoph. Acharn. 259–261 *ὦ Ξανθία, σφῷν δ' ἐστὶν ὀρθὸς ἐκτέος | ὁ φαλλὸς ἐξόπισθε τῆς κανηφόρου· | ἐγὼ δ' ἀκολουθῶν ᾄσομαι τὸ φαλλικόν.*

[3] For the mixture of raillery with songs to Dionysus in the *φαλλικά* see the account in Athen. p. 622 of the *φαλλοφόροι* at Sicyon, who on first entering offered an address to Dionysus, *εἶτα προστρέχοντες ἐτώθαζον οὓς ἂν προέλοιντο.* The importance of the leader in these impromptu effusions is shown by Aristotle's remark (Poet. c. 4) that comedy originated *ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξαρχόντων τὰ φαλλικά.*

[4] Anon. de Comoed. (p. 23 in Dindorf's Aristoph.) *καὶ κωμῳδίαν αὐτὴν καλοῦσιν, ἐπεὶ ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς ἐκώμαζον.* This is the etymology favoured by Aristotle (Poet. c. 3). The other derivation, from *κώμη* a village (Anon. de Comoed. l. c.), is no doubt wrong.

together to open the casks of new wine, and to welcome with various rejoicings the renewed fertility of nature[1]. On such occasions they were accustomed to celebrate the praises of their benefactor, the god of wine and vegetation, in a kind of hymn called the dithyramb; and from this hymn Greek tragedy is descended[2]. The dithyramb, like the rest of the Bacchic usages, was probably in its earliest form an importation from Phrygia, being sung to melodies in the Phrygian style, and accompanied by the flute—an instrument closely associated with Phrygian music[3]. It is mentioned for the first time in literature by Archilochus, the iambic poet of the seventh century; but had doubtless become familiar to the Greek populations at a much earlier date[4]. It was cultivated with special enthusiasm at Thebes, Corinth, and Naxos—all important centres of Dionysiac worship[5]. In Attica, where it was destined eventually to acquire the greatest celebrity, it would form a conspicuous element, from remote times, in the spring festivals of Dionysus.

The dithyramb belonged to that type of performance which is called a choral dance; in other words, it was a hymn chanted by a chorus, and accompanied by illustrative gestures and motions[6]. Its object was to describe in song various episodes

[1] This is shown by the fact that tragedy was the principal feature at the City Dionysia, the great spring festival; while at the Lenaea, the winter festival, it was an importation of later date, and was always subordinate to comedy. There is also the fact that the dithyramb, the source of tragedy, was never performed at the Lenaea in classical times, but was an important element in the festivities at the City Dionysia. On these points see the Attic Theatre, p. 37.

[2] Aristot. Poet. c. 4 ἡ μὲν (τραγῳδία) ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξαρχόντων τὸν διθύραμβον (ηὐξήθη). Cp. Themistius, or. 26, 316 D; Diog. Laërt. 3. 56; Athen. p. 630; Evanthius de Comoedia, p. 4 (Reifferscheid).

[3] Aristot. Pol. 8. 7; Proclus, Chrestomathia, c. 14 (p. 383 Gaisford).

[4] Archilochus, frag. 77 ὦτ Διωνύσοι' ἄνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος | οἶδα διθύραμβον, οἴνῳ συγκεραυνωθεὶς φρένας.

[5] Hence Pindar, in different poems, ascribed the invention of the dithyramb to Thebes, Corinth, and Naxos respectively (Schol. Pind. Ol. 13. 25).

[6] It is clear that ὄρχησις (mimetic dancing) played a large part in the early dithyramb. Thus Aristotle (Poet. c. 4) says that tragedy was originally ὀρχηστικωτέρα. The early tragic poets, whose dramas were mainly lyrical, were called ὀρχησταί (Athen. p. 22). The name of the dithyrambic dance was τυρβασία (Pollux, 4. 104).

from the life of Dionysus, and at the same time to present these episodes in a concrete form by means of expressive mimicry and pantomime[1]. The singers disguised themselves as satyrs, or companions of Dionysus, to make the representation more lively and picturesque[2]. Dressed in this fashion they danced in a ring round the smoking altar, chanting their recital of the god's adventures, and exhibiting each phase of the story with such passionate realism of gesture, as to make the spectators almost believe that they were present, not at a mere narrative, but at the occurrence of the events themselves[3].

Choral dances of this kind can hardly be said to exist at the present day; but among the early races of mankind they were a favourite institution, being regularly employed in the service of religion for the purpose of impressing the sacred legends upon the minds of the people. In Greece they were especially common. At Delos, for example, there was a dance called the Crane, to commemorate the escape of Theseus from the Labyrinth. The dancers were arranged in a long line, one behind the other, and went winding to and fro, and in and out, to imitate the intricacies of the Labyrinth[4]. At Delphi the contest between Apollo and the Python was represented in a similar manner[5]. But the choral dance which most nearly resembled the dithyramb was one performed at Crete, in celebration of the birth of Zeus. The chorus were dressed in the guise of Curetes, the mythical saviours of the infant god; and in this costume they sang and acted the whole story—Cronus devouring his children, Rhea in the pangs of child-birth, the

[1] Zenobius, 5. 40 *τῶν χορῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰθισμένων διθύραμβον ᾄδειν εἰς τὸν Διόνυσον*. Proclus, Chrestomathia, c. 12 *ὁ δὲ διθύραμβος γράφεται μὲν εἰς Διόνυσον*.

[2] Etym. Mag. v. *τραγῳδία· τὰ πολλὰ οἱ χοροὶ ἐκ Σατύρων συνίσταντο*. Cp. Aelian, Var. Hist. 3. 40; Diod. 4. 5. Aristotle (Poet. c. 4) says that tragedy was developed *ἐκ σατυρικοῦ*. In the later satyric drama, which was intended as a reminiscence of the old style of poetry, the chorus always consisted of satyrs.

[3] Evanthius de Comoedia, p. 4 'initium tragoediae a rebus divinis est incohatum, quibus pro fructibus vota solventes operabantur antiqui. Nam incensis iam altaribus et admoto hirco, id genus carminis, quod sacer chorus reddebat Libero patri, tragoedia dicebatur, . . . carmen . . . quod chorus circum aras fumantes nunc spatiatus, nunc consistens, nunc revolvens gyros, cum tibicine concinebat.'

[4] Pollux, 4. 101.

[5] Plut. Quaest. Graec. c. 12.

drowning of her cries with the clash of cymbals, and the safe removal of the child in the midst of the uproar[1].

From such parallel examples we may derive some notion of the character of the dithyrambic dances performed by the satyrs in honour of Dionysus. The wealth and variety of the Bacchic legends—the various stories about the mysterious birth of the god, about his education upon Mount Nysa, his invasion and conquest of India, his conflict with the kings of Thrace and Thebes, his perilous voyage to Naxos, and his marriage with the deserted Ariadne—would supply abundant materials for mimetic representation. Some scholars, it is true, are of opinion that the dithyramb was restricted in early times to a single fable—the birth of Dionysus; and that the performance of this legend at the spring festivals was intended to typify the annual revival of Nature in the spring[2]. This theory, however, is unsupported by adequate testimony; and it seems on general grounds more reasonable to suppose that the old Bacchic hymns were co-extensive in range with the whole of the Bacchic mythology.

§ 4. *Arion and the Dithyramb.*

For a long time after its first introduction into Greece the dithyramb was regarded more as a kind of folk-song than as a regular branch of literature, being performed by the voluntary efforts of the farmers at the rustic festivals[3]. Its elevation to the rank of artistic poetry was due to the Dorians. Among the

[1] Strabo, 10. 3, 11.

[2] So Bergk, Griechische Literaturgeschichte, vol. iii, p. 12. This view is based on Plat. Legg. 700 B *καὶ ἀλλὸ (εἶδος ᾠδῆς) Διονύσου γένεσις, οἶμαι, διθύραμβος λεγόμενος.* But Plato's description of the dithyramb as the 'birth of Dionysus' is apparently derived from the fanciful etymology which connected the word 'dithyramb' with 'two doors,' and referred it to the double birth of Dionysus, from Semele and from Zeus. Cp. Etym. Mag. v. *διθύραμβος· ἀπὸ τοῦ δύο θύρας βαίνειν.* Schol. Plat. Rep. 394 C *ὀνομάζεται γὰρ οὕτως (ὁ διθύραμβος) . . . διὰ τὸ δύξαι γενέσθαι δίς, ἔκ τε τῆς Σεμέλης καὶ τοῦ μηροῦ τοῦ Διός.* It is not likely that Plato had any special information concerning the contents of the primitive dithyrambs. Nor is it probable that the early Greeks were conscious of any typical significance underlying the story about the birth of the deity.

The real derivation of the word *διθύραμβος* is unknown. It is apparently connected with *θρίαμβος*, and may perhaps be of Phrygian origin.

[3] Aristot. Problem. 19. 15; Poet. c. 4.

Dorians the art of choral composition, with its elaborate mixture of singing and dancing, had been practised from time immemorial with peculiar zeal; but was first brought to perfection during the middle of the seventh century by the genius of poets such as Alcman and Stesichorus, whose nomes, paeans, hymns, and other similar productions soon became famous over the whole of Greece. The dithyramb naturally shared in the general development of choral poetry, and the author to whom it owed its advancement was Arion[1].

Arion, whose fame has been immortalised by Herodotus, was the most celebrated harp-player of his time[2]. Though a native of Lesbos, he lived the greater part of his life at the court of Periander, the tyrant of Corinth, and must therefore have flourished at the end of the seventh century, and the beginning of the sixth[3]. It was at Corinth that he first brought the dithyramb into general prominence by the improvements which he introduced[4]. The exact nature of his services has been somewhat obscured, owing to the Greek habit of ascribing the discovery of an art to its first distinguished exponent. Thus Arion was said by many writers to have 'invented' the dithyramb—an obvious exaggeration[5]. He was also said to have been the first to devise the circular arrangement of the chorus, and this fact was playfully expressed in mythological language by calling him the 'son of Cycleus[6].' But the position of the chorus in a ring round the altar is a natural practice in itself, and had probably been adopted long before his time. What Arion appears to have done was not so much to create new

[1] Both Suidas (v. Ἀρίων) and Herodotus (1. 23) emphasise the fact that Arion was the first to give *names* to his dithyrambs; which seems to imply that before his time no dithyrambs were of sufficient permanent value to require distinctive titles.

[2] Herod. 1. 23.

[3] Id. l. c.

[4] Id. l. c.; Pind. Ol. 13. 25.

[5] Proclus, Chrestomathia, c. 12 τὸν δὲ ἀρξάμενον τῆς ᾠδῆς Ἀριστοτέλης Ἀρίονα λέγει. Suidas (v. Ἀρίων) καὶ πρῶτος χορὸν στῆσαι καὶ διθύραμβον ᾆσαι. Herod. l. c. διθύραμβον πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ποιήσαντα.

[6] Ἀρίων . . . Κυκλέως υἱός (Suidas s. v.). Proclus, Chrest. c. 12 ὃς πρῶτος τὸν κύκλιον ἤγαγε χορόν. Such was also the opinion of Hellanicus and Dicaearchus, according to Schol. Aristoph. Av. 1403. Cp. Photius, p. 185; Tzetzes ad Lycoph. p. 1, &c.

forms, as to introduce order, system, and regularity into those which already existed. Thus it was he, most likely, who fixed the number of dancers at fifty—a number which was never afterwards changed[1]. He may also have been the author of the antistrophic arrangement of the verse[2]. This arrangement, which was common to all the lyrical compositions of the Dorians, as systematised by the poets of the seventh century, was intended to guide and regulate the alternate movements of the dancers. But it is hardly likely to have been employed in the earliest form of the dithyramb, since it implies a greater precision in the evolutions of the dance than seems consistent with the character of the old folk-songs.

Arion is sometimes said to have revolutionised the musical character of the dithyramb, and to have converted it into a more dignified species of composition, by substituting the grave Doric mode for the emotional music of the Phrygian style, and by employing the harp as well as the flute[3]. But the evidence for these assertions is far from reliable[4]. And the fact that in later times the dithyramb was always set to Phrygian music, and to the accompaniment of the flute, renders it improbable that Arion should have effected any such inno-

[1] Simonides, epigr. 147 *πεντήκοντ' ἀνδρῶν καλὰ μαθόντι χορῷ*. Schol. Aesch. Timarch. § 11 *πεντήκοντα παίδων χορὸν ἢ ἀνδρῶν*. Pollux 4. 110. Tzetzes ad Lycoph. p. 1.

[2] Aristot. Probl. 19. 15 *διὸ καὶ οἱ διθύραμβοι, ἐπειδὴ μιμητικοὶ ἐγένοντο, οὐκέτι ἔχουσιν ἀντιστρόφους· πρότερον δὲ εἶχον*. Dion. Hal. Comp. Verb. 19 *ἐπεὶ παρά γε τοῖς ἀρχαίοις τεταγμένος ἦν ὁ διθύραμβος*.

[3] Sittl, Griech. Literatur. 3, p. 113. K. O. Müller, Greek Literature, p. 204.

[4] The only evidence for the employment of the Doric mode is Simonides' epigram on the dithyrambic victory of the tribe Acamanthis (epigr. 148 *εὖ δ' ἐτιθηνεῖτο γλυκερὰν ὄπα Δωρίοις Ἀρίστων | Ἀργεῖος ἡδὺ πνεῦμα χέων καθαροῖς ἐν αὐλοῖς*. Here however Bergk conj. *Δωριεύς*. In any case the testimony only applies to the fifth century B. C. The fragment of Pratinas (Bergk, p. 1219), where he speaks of *τὰν ἐμὰν Δώριον χορείαν*, is from a *hyporcheme*, not a dithyramb. It is true that the latest dithyrambic poets mixed the Dorian, Phrygian, and Lydian modes in the same dithyramb; but the practice was regarded as an unjustifiable licence.

The introduction of the harp along with the flute is inferred from the fact that Arion is said to have been the greatest harp-player of his time. But there is nothing to show that he used the harp in his dithyrambs. The hymns and proems which he is known to have composed (Proclus, Chrest. c. 14; Suidas v. *Ἀρίων*) would naturally be set to the harp.

vation as that suggested[1]. Moreover, Aristotle describes the attempt of Philoxenus, in the fifth century, to write a dithyramb in the Dorian style, as a novel experiment which was foredoomed to failure because of its inherent impracticability[2].

From the dramatic point of view by far the most important of the changes ascribed to Arion is the insertion of 'spoken verses' in the midst of the choral odes[3]. The nature of these interludes is not further defined by the author of the statement, but may be gathered from other sources. We are told by Aristotle that the germ of tragedy was to be found in the speeches delivered by the leader of the dithyramb[4]. We also know that in the period of which we are now treating it was customary for the conductor of the dithyramb to occasionally

[1] Proclus, Chrest. c. 14 ὁ μὲν γὰρ (διθύραμβος) τὸν Φρύγιον καὶ Ὑποφρύγιον ἁρμόζεται. Aristot. Pol. 8. 7 ἔχει γὰρ τὴν αὐτὴν δύναμιν ἡ φρυγιστὶ τῶν ἁρμονιῶν ἥνπερ αὐλὸς ἐν τοῖς ὀργάνοις· ἄμφω γὰρ ὀργιαστικὰ καὶ παθητικά. δηλοῖ δ' ἡ ποίησις· πᾶσα γὰρ βακχεία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ τοιαύτη κίνησις μάλιστα τῶν ὀργάνων ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς αὐλοῖς, τῶν δ' ἁρμονιῶν ἐν τοῖς φρυγιστὶ μέλεσι λαμβάνει ταῦτα τὸ πρέπον.

In the numerous inscriptions (Corp. Ins. Gr. 217–226), which record the victories of dithyrambic choruses, the name of the flute-player is always given (e. g. Ἄρατος ηὔλει, Χάρης Θηβαῖος ηὔλει), but there is never any mention of a harp-player. The process of selecting the flute-players is described by Demosthenes (Meid. §§ 11, 12).

[2] Aristot. Pol. 8. 7 οἷον ὁ διθύραμβος ὁμολογουμένως εἶναι δοκεῖ Φρύγιον. καὶ τούτου πολλὰ παραδείγματα λέγουσιν οἱ περὶ τὴν σύνεσιν ταύτην ἄλλα τε, καὶ διότι Φιλόξενος ἐγχειρήσας ἐν τῇ δωριστὶ ποιῆσαι διθύραμβον τοὺς Μύσους οὐχ οἷός τ' ἦν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως αὐτῆς ἐξέπεσεν εἰς τὴν φρυγιστὶ τὴν προσήκουσαν ἁρμονίαν πάλιν.

[3] Suidas (v. Ἀρίων), λέγεται . . . πρῶτος χορὸν στῆσαι καὶ διθύραμβον ᾆσαι, καὶ ὀνομάσαι τὸ ᾀδόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ χοροῦ, καὶ σατύρους εἰσενεγκεῖν ἔμμετρα λέγοντας. The words ἔμμετρα λέγοντας, coming immediately after ᾆσαι and ᾀδόμενον, cannot be a mere paraphrase for choral singing, but must denote 'spoken verses.' The word εἰσενεγκεῖν presents some difficulty. It would naturally imply that the chorus consisted of ordinary persons, and that the satyrs were extra performers, who were 'introduced' for the purpose of speaking the dialogue. But it appears to be certain from other testimonies that the satyrs formed the chorus (see p. 15, note 2). Moreover the addition of an extra performer outside the chorus, for the purpose of taking the lead in the dialogue, was an innovation always ascribed to Thespis. We must conclude, therefore, that the above passage means that the satyrs, besides singing the choral odes, had also spoken dialogues in verse assigned to them. But the language is loose and inaccurate, whether the fault be due to the original author of the statement, or to the carelessness with which Suidas has made his transcription.

[4] Aristot. Poet. c. 4 καὶ ἡ μὲν (τραγῳδία) ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξαρχόντων τὸν διθύραμβον.

mount upon a small platform, and carry on a dialogue with the other members of the chorus[1]. Hence we may fairly conclude that the speeches inserted by Arion consisted of short conversations in verse between the leader and his fellow-performers. The subject of these dialogues would be the adventures of Dionysus; their purpose would be to explain and amplify the narrative contained in the choral songs. They appear to have been composed in the lively rhythm of the trochaic tetrameter, and to have been accompanied by explanatory pantomime on the part of the chorus[2]. Whether they were really the invention of Arion, or merely an old custom which he adopted and modified, may be regarded as doubtful. But there can be no question as to their influence on the history of the drama, since it was out of these apparently unimportant interludes that the dialogue of tragedy was eventually developed.

The dithyramb then, as fashioned by Arion and the Dorians, was a choral ode in honour of Dionysus, set to a brisk kind of music, and sung by a troop of fifty satyrs as they danced and gesticulated round the sacrificial altar. Whether its general tone was serious or comic is a point which has been much debated. Many critics find it impossible to believe that a performance which was destined to become the parent of tragedy should have been anything but pathetic in its original character. Hence they are led to assume that the dithyramb, at this time, was concerned mainly with the 'sorrows of Dionysus,' that its key-note was impassioned sympathy and self-devotion, and that the feeling which was supposed to actuate the satyrs was an 'intense desire to fight, to conquer, and to suffer in common with the god[3].' This description, however, appears to have

[1] Pollux 4. 123 ἐλεὸς δ' ἦν τράπεζα ἀρχαία, ἐφ' ἣν πρὸ Θέσπιδος εἷς τις ἀναβὰς τοῖς χορευταῖς ἀπεκρίνατο. The interval between Arion and Thespis was only about thirty years. This dialogue, therefore, between the choreutae and the leader of the dithyramb can hardly be of later date than Arion's time.

[2] Aristot. Poet. c. 4 τό τε μέτρον ἐκ τετραμέτρου ἰαμβεῖον ἐγένετο· τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον τετραμέτρῳ ἐχρῶντο διὰ τὸ σατυρικὴν καὶ ὀρχηστικωτέραν εἶναι τὴν ποίησιν. Aristotle plainly means that the early *dialogue* was in the trochaic tetrameter.

[3] Müller's Greek Literature, pp. 288, 289.

been suggested by the orgiastic worship of Dionysus, as performed by ecstatic Maenads at Thebes and Delphi, where the dominant note, undoubtedly, was one of agonised sympathy with the sufferings of the god. It is manifestly inappropriate, as applied to a chorus of satyrs, in whom enthusiastic self-devotion was the last thing to be expected. The testimony of Aristotle is decisive on this subject. He tells us that the solemnity of tragedy was a later development, and that the earlier performances were 'satyric' in tone, and characterised by comic diction, sprightly metres, and pantomimic gesture[1]. In the face of these statements it is impossible to describe the early dithyramb as a sad and melancholy composition.

At the same time it is unnecessary to push the evidence of Aristotle too far. The dithyramb, it is true, was the offspring of wine and merriment at the rustic festivals of Dionysus, and its prevalent sentiment was one of joyfulness and gaiety[2]. But, like most Dionysiac poetry and music, it may have been susceptible of a great variety of emotion[3]. In fact, the later satyric drama, which was said to reflect the tone of the old choruses of satyrs, was never a merely comic performance, but always contained a certain tinge of poetry and romance[4]. Probably, therefore, we shall not be far wrong in attributing the same versatility to the dithyramb, and in assuming that coarse jests and raillery alternated with more serious passions, according to the varying phases of the legend which was being represented. From poetry of this composite character the tragic drama might easily be developed, by the suppression of the one element, and the elevation of the other.

It was apparently about this time that the words 'tragic' and

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 4 *ἔτι δὲ τὸ μέγεθος ἐκ μικρῶν μύθων καὶ λέξεως γελοίας διὰ τὸ ἐκ σατυρικοῦ μεταβαλεῖν ὀψὲ ἀπεσεμνύνθη . . . τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρῶτον τετραμέτρῳ ἐχρῶντο διὰ τὸ σατυρικὴν καὶ ὀρχηστικωτέραν εἶναι τὴν ποίησιν.*

[2] Proclus, Chrest. c. 14 *ἔοικε δὲ ὁ μὲν διθύραμβος ἀπὸ τῆς κατὰ τοὺς ἀγροὺς παιδιᾶς καὶ τῆς ἐν τοῖς πότοις εὐφροσύνης εὑρεθῆναι.*

[3] See above, p. 7.

[4] Hor. Ars Poet. 220–250; especially 244–247 'silvis deducti caveant me iudice Fauni | ne velut innati triviis ac paene forenses | aut nimium teneris iuvenentur versibus unquam, | aut immunda crepent gnominiosaque dicta.'

'tragedy' first came into existence. The terms had not as yet acquired any of their later connotation, but were used to describe the dithyrambs of Arion and his successors. Thus Arion was said to have been the inventor of the 'tragic style,' his choral odes were called 'tragedies,' and he and Epigenes were both classed among the 'tragic poets[1].' The word 'tragedy' means literally a 'goat-song,' and the origin of the expression, as applied to the dithyramb, is open to doubt. It may have arisen from the fact that the dithyramb was performed at the sacrifice of the goat, or from the fact that a goat was the prize for the successful poet[2]. But according to the view now most generally adopted, the name was derived from the chorus of satyrs, who were frequently called 'goats' on account of their appearance and licentious character[3]. This explanation has the advantage of assimilating the etymology of tragedy to that of comedy. As comedy was the song of the 'comus,' or band of revellers, so tragedy was the song of the 'tragi,' or goat-like satyrs.

[1] Suidas (v. Ἀρίων), λέγεται καὶ τραγικοῦ τρόπου εὑρετὴς γενέσθαι. Tzetzes ad Lycoph. p. 256 (Müller) τραγῳδοὶ δὲ ποιηταί· Ἀρίων, Θέσπις, Φρύνιχος, Αἰσχύλος κ.τ.λ. Suidas (v. Θέσπις) τραγικὸς ἑκκαιδέκατος ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου γενομένου τραγῳδιοποιοῦ Ἐπιγένους τοῦ Σικυωνίου. Herod. 5. 67 (of the dithyrambs at Sicyon in honour of Adrastus) πρὸς τὰ πάθεα αὐτοῦ τραγικοῖσι χοροῖσι ἐγέραιρον. Suidas (v. οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον), Ἐπιγένους τοῦ Σικυωνίου τραγῳδίαν εἰς τὸν Διόνυσον ποιήσαντος.

Of course it may be maintained that the words τραγικός and τραγῳδία were of later date than Arion and Epigenes, and were only applied retrospectively to their compositions. But the words must have originated while tragedy was still a mere 'goat-song,' and therefore within about sixty years of Arion's death. On the whole it seems most probable that the terms for this new style of choral poetry were as old as Arion, who first brought it into general prominence.

[2] The former of these two explanations is given by Müller, Greek Literature, p. 291. The latter was the one generally preferred by the ancients themselves: cp. Etym. Magn. v. τραγῳδία; Diomed. Gramm. 3, p. 484; Euseb. Chron. 2, Olymp. 48, &c. It appears that in the dithyrambic contests of the sixth century the first prize was a bull, the second a jar of wine, the third a goat (Schol. Plat. Rep. 394 C; Anthol. Pal. 6. 213). At Athens, in the early tragic contests, the prize is said to have been a goat (Marmor Par. ep. 43; Anthol. Pal. 7. 410).

[3] This is one of the explanations given in Etym. Magn. v. τραγῳδία (ἢ ὅτι τὰ πολλὰ οἱ χοροὶ ἐκ σατύρων συνίσταντο, οὓς ἐκάλουν τράγους σκώπτοντες). For this use of τράγος cp. Hesych. τράγος· σάτυρος; and Aesch. frag. 207 (Nauck) τράγος γένειον ἄρα πενθήσεις σύ γε.

§ 5. *Later History of the Dithyramb.*

Hitherto the progress of the dithyramb has been uniform and straightforward. But we now reach that point where its course begins to part asunder. The main stream of dithyrambic poetry gradually diverges into two distinct branches, the one choral, the other dramatic. The names 'tragedy' and 'dithyramb,' which had previously been used as convertible terms, and applied to the whole class of poetry without distinction, are now employed to discriminate the separate species. The choral branch is henceforth known as the 'dithyramb,' while the dramatic branch appropriates the title of 'tragedy.'

As the dithyramb proper now ceases to have any further connexion with the advancement of the drama, it may be interesting at this point to sketch briefly its subsequent career. It appears, then, at an early period to have dispensed with those spoken dialogues which had been inserted by Arion, and to have become once more exclusively choral. It likewise proceeded to extend its range beyond the legends of Dionysus, and to choose its subjects from every part of the Greek mythology[1]; and as a consequence the chorus of satyrs, being no longer appropriate, were replaced by singers in ordinary costume[2]. Many improvements were introduced by Lasus, towards the end of the sixth century, at which period public competitions in dithyrambic poetry began to be established at various festivals[3]. At Athens the institution of such contests dates from the year 508[4]. During the earlier part of the succeeding century the dithyramb reached its highest perfection in the hands of Pindar and Simonides; but after their death it soon began to deteriorate. The antistrophic arrange-

[1] Zenobius, 5. 40. Thus Simonides wrote a Memnon (frag. 28 Bergk), Praxilla an Achilles (frag. 1). The earliest known instance of the practice was at Sicyon, where it was customary, even in the seventh century B.C., to sing dithyrambs or 'tragic choruses' in honour of Adrastus. These dithyrambs were restored to Dionysus by the tyrant Cleisthenes (Herod. 5. 67).

[2] The costume might be very magnificent, if the choregus cared to meet the expense. Demosthenes provided gold crowns for his dithyrambic chorus (Meid. § 16).

[3] Suidas, v. Λάσος.

[4] Marmor Par. ep. 46.

ment, systematised by the Dorians, was abandoned in place of a loose and irregular metre, suited to the licence of the newer style[1]. The words were sacrificed to the music; sound took the place of sense; the vulgar taste was gratified by realistic imitations of thunderstorms, rushing rivers, and other natural phenomena[2]. Eventually all poetry disappeared in a mere sea of bombast, so that the phrase 'as foolish as a dithyramb' became a proverbial expression among the later Greeks[3].

While dithyrambic poetry was thus gradually assuming a new character, it appears that for more than a century after the death of Arion the older kind of dithyramb, as composed by him, with its chorus of satyrs, its spoken interludes, and its primitive phraseology, was still retained in many Doric states, owing to that same conservative feeling which led, in later times, to the resuscitation of the satyric drama by the Athenians. Thus Pindar is said to have composed seventeen 'tragic dramas,' and certain 'tragedies' are included in the works of Simonides[4]. These compositions can hardly have been regular plays in the style of Aeschylus and Phrynichus. Nor can they have been dithyrambs in the later sense of the word, since in the list of Pindar's writings the 'dithyrambs' are clearly distinguished from the dramas[5]. It is difficult therefore to avoid the conclusion that they were 'tragic choruses' of the antique type. Böckh, by whom the existence of these survivals was first pointed out, gave them the name of 'lyrical tragedies[6].' After the middle of the fifth century they disappear from view[7].

[1] Aristot. Probl. 19. 15. The change is usually ascribed to Melanippides (about 450 B.C.) on the strength of Aristot. Rhet. 3. 9 Μελανιππίδην ποιήσαντα ἀντὶ τῶν ἀντιστρόφων ἀναβολάς (cp. in the same chapter αἱ ἐν τοῖς διθυράμβοις ἀναβολαί); and Suidas (v. Μελανιππίδης), ὃς ἐν τῇ τῶν διθυράμβων ποιήσει ἐκαινοτόμησε πλεῖστα. But the fragment of Pindar's dithyramb (No. 53 Bergk) is not antistrophic.

[2] Plat. Rep. 396 B.

[3] Schol. Aristoph. Av. 1392 ὁ δὲ νοῦς ἐλάχιστος, ὡς ἡ παροιμία "καὶ διθυράμβων νοῦν ἔχεις ἐλάττονα."

[4] Suidas, vv. Πίνδαρος, Σιμωνίδης.

[5] Id. v. Πίνδαρος . . . ὕμνους, διθυράμβους, σκόλια, ἐγκώμια, θρήνους, δράματα τραγικὰ ιζ'.

[6] Corp. Ins. Gr. 1584 note.

[7] Böckh supposed that these 'lyrical tragedies' lasted on, and maintained a separate existence, as late as the second century B.C. His opinion was based on a misunderstanding of the phrase παλαιὰ τραγῳδία, which occurs

It now remains to trace the rise of the dramatic branch of the dithyramb, and its gradual transformation into the tragic drama. Henceforth the scene of the inquiry is confined to Attic soil. From a remote period, as we have pointed out, it had been the custom of the Attic villagers to sing dithyrambic choruses at the various spring festivals of Dionysus, though these performances had hitherto been of a rude and primitive type. But as the improvements introduced by the Dorians became generally known, they were adopted by other races, and especially by the Athenians, whose choruses now began to acquire greater dignity and refinement. The new Attic dithyramb, thus remodelled under Doric influence, was the immediate source of the tragic drama.

The Dorians, on the strength of this circumstance, were accustomed in ancient times to claim the invention of tragedy as their own [1]; nor can it be said that the claim was entirely without justification, seeing that it was they who were the first to raise to an artistic level the kind of chorus from which tragedy was developed. Certain scholars, however, refuse to concede to them even this modest share in the evolution of the drama, and deny the existence of any connexion between the Attic and the Doric dithyramb. But the fact of the connexion seems to be clearly substantiated. Common tradition placed Arion of Corinth and Epigenes of Sicyon at the head of that list of tragic poets which culminated in Aeschylus and Sophocles [2]. Further than this, the Doric tinge which was retained to the last by the choral odes of tragedy points unmistakeably to a Doric original. But though the influence of the Dorians cannot be altogether ignored, yet the real discovery of tragedy

frequently in inscriptions, and which he supposed to denote 'tragedy of the old style.' But more recent inscriptions have proved conclusively that the term means 'tragedies by the old poets,' such as Sophocles and Euripides, as opposed to *καιναὶ τραγῳδίαι*, or new and original tragedies. The whole question is fully discussed in Müller's Bühnenalterthümer, pp. 384-388.

[1] Themistius, Or. 27, p. 337 B *τραγῳδίας εὑρεταὶ μὲν Σικυώνιοι, τελεσιουργοὶ δὲ Ἀττικοὶ ποιηταί.* Aristot. Poet. c. 3 *διὸ καὶ ἀντιποιοῦνται τῆς τε τραγῳδίας καὶ τῆς κωμῳδίας οἱ Δωριεῖς.*

[2] Tzetzes ad Lycoph. p. 256 (Müller); Suidas v. *Θέσπις.*

—the effort of genius which converted a chorus into a drama—was exclusively the work of the Athenians. The first decisive step in this important revolution was due to Thespis, whose innovations will be described in the next section.

§ 6. *The Innovations of Thespis.*

Thespis, the founder of Attic tragedy, was a native of Icaria, a village situated not very far from Marathon, in a lofty and secluded position on the eastern slopes of the Pentelicus range. Together with the neighbouring communities of Plotheia and Semachidae it formed the district called Epacria or the 'Uplands[1].' This remote region, in which Thespis made his earliest theatrical experiments, must always hold a memorable place in the history of the stage. It is described by travellers as a picturesque and striking country, abounding in thick forests and romantic vales; while from the mountain ridge the eye looks down upon a wide and beautiful prospect, extending across the plain and crescent-shaped bay of Marathon as far as the distant hills of Euboea[2].

The place was a great centre of Dionysiac worship and tradition. Icarus, the mythical personification of Icaria, was said to have been the first person to welcome Dionysus into Attica, and to teach men the cultivation of the grape and the use of wine. Soon afterwards, however, he was slain by the neighbouring shepherds in a fit of intoxication, and his daughter Erigone hung herself through grief; and this tragic event led to the institution of an annual ceremony of expiation, at which the maidens of the district used to swing upon trees in commemoration of Erigone's death[3]. Semachidae had also its

[1] Θέσπις· Ἰκαρίου, πόλεως Ἀττικῆς (Suidas s. v.). The site of Icaria, which was previously uncertain, has been discovered by recent excavations of the American School at Athens. For details concerning its situation, and its connexion with Plotheia and Semachidae, see Dyer's article in The Nation, March 22, 1888. Cp. also Carl Buck's Inscriptions from Icaria, in the American Journal of Archaeology, Dec. 1888. The name of the town is sometimes given as Icaria (Steph. Byzant. Ἰκαρία· δῆμος τῆς Αἰγηΐδος φυλῆς), sometimes as Icarius (Hesych. Ἰκάριος· δῆμος Ἀθήνησι, φυλῆς Αἰγηΐδος; Athen. p. 40 ἐν Ἰκαρίῳ τῆς Ἀττικῆς, &c.).

[2] Dyer, in The Nation, March 22, 1888.

[3] Apollod. 3. 14; Servius on Georg.

local legend, which told how the daughters of Semachus had been appointed priestesses of Dionysus, because of the hospitality with which they received him on his first arrival[1]. The existence of these fables shows that Epacria was a region under the peculiar care of Dionysus; and the Bacchic festivals, with their dithyrambs in the spring, and their phallic songs in the winter, were celebrated here with more than ordinary magnificence. Their fame appears to have attracted even strangers, since Susarion, the comic poet of Megara, was induced to leave his native home and settle in Icaria, where he laid the foundations of Attic comedy[2].

In this district Thespis was born about the beginning of the sixth century[3]. It was here that he passed his youth, amid an atmosphere of Dionysiac poetry and associations; and it was here that he first conceived the notion of improving the structure of the dithyramb[4]. His innovation, though vital and far-reaching in its results, may be described in a very few words. It consisted simply in the introduction of an 'actor,' as opposed to the ordinary members of the chorus[5]. The object of employing this additional performer was to give greater prominence and effect to the interludes, or spoken conversations, with which the lyrical part of the dithyramb was diversified, by transferring them from the choristers, by whom they had hitherto been carried on, to the leader of the chorus and to the actor.

2. 389. There is an interesting discussion on the legend about Erigone, and the character of the festival, by Miss Harrison, in Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens, pp. xxxix–xlvii.

[1] Steph. Byzant. v. Σημαχίδαι.

[2] Marmor Par. ep. 39; Schol. Dionys. Thrac. p. 748.

[3] Thespis began to exhibit in Athens before the death of Solon in 558 B.C. His career in Icaria must therefore be placed during the earlier half of the sixth century. See Plut. Solon, c. 29; Diog. Laërt. 1. 59.

[4] Athen. p. 40 ἀπὸ μέθης καὶ ἡ τῆς τραγῳδίας εὕρεσις ἐν Ἰκαρίῳ τῆς Ἀττικῆς εὑρέθη.

[5] Diog. Laërt. 3. 56 ἐν τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ πρότερον μὲν μόνος ὁ χορὸς διεδραμάτιζεν, ὕστερον δὲ Θέσπις ἕνα ὑποκριτὴν ἐξεῦρεν ὑπὲρ τοῦ διαναπαύεσθαι τὸν χορόν. The term ὑποκριτής, or 'actor,' was never applied to the chorus-singers, or χορευταί. Etymologically, ὑποκριτής means 'one who answers'; and the origin of the term is due to the fact that in the early drama the chief duty of the single actor was to hold a dialogue with, and reply to the questions of, the chorus. See the Attic Theatre, p. 203.

To appreciate the significance of this apparently simple change we must consider what progress had already been made in the direction of dramatic representation. The essential attributes of a dramatic performance are impersonation and dialogue. The actors come forward in assumed characters, and then by means of speech and conversation gradually unfold a story. Now both these qualities were to be found in the early dithyramb, but only in a very elementary stage. The disguise of the chorus as rustic satyrs was an example of impersonation; but there was no attempt as yet to impersonate the principal agents in the plot, the satyrs being merely witnesses and bystanders. Again, the spoken interludes in the dithyramb afforded an instance of the use of dialogue; but the dialogue was simply a conversation between spectators concerning events which were happening to other people, and amounted to little more than an amplification of the narrative already given in the choral odes. Hitherto none of the chief characters had been accustomed to appear in person, or to tell their own story by their speeches and conversations. It would obviously therefore be a great step in advance, if the impersonation and the dialogue were extended to the actual agents, and if they were to be seen upon the stage in bodily shape, and were to talk and converse about their own fortunes and purposes. A change of this kind would at once carry the performance across the border-line which separates narrative from dramatic poetry. This change was effected by Thespis. The actor whom he introduced played in turn the part of all the prominent figures in the legend, from gods and kings down to heralds and messengers. He counterfeited their appearance, spoke their sentiments, and exhibited their passions. For the first time in the history of the drama the action, instead of being related by outsiders, was exhibited to a large extent in dramatic form by the speeches and movements of the persons involved. It was not therefore without reason that Thespis came to be regarded by the common opinion of antiquity as the real originator of the tragic drama[1].

[1] Anthol. Pal. 7. 410 *Θέσπις ἐγὼ τραγικὴν δε ἀνέπλασα πρῶτος ἀοιδήν*; ibid. 411 *Θέσπιδος εὕρεμα τοῦτο*; Plut. Solon c. 29 *ἀρχομένων δὲ τῶν περὶ Θέσπιν*

§ 7. *Character of the Thespian Drama.*

Such then was the general scope of the changes introduced by Thespis. It is unfortunate that none of his compositions have been preserved, even in a fragmentary state, to enable us to judge of their merit[1]. Still in spite of this deficiency it is possible to collect from various sources some notion of the character of his plays, and of the manner in which they were performed. We are told that Thespis, like most of the early dramatists, took the part of the 'actor' himself, and that he used to appear in several characters in succession, by means of rapid changes of costume[2]. For this purpose he was accustomed at first to paint his face with white-lead or purslane; but later on he invented a kind of linen mask[3]. Female masks, however, were not introduced until a subsequent period; whence we may conclude that female characters were unknown to the Thespian drama[4]. The use of masks, which is not unsuitable to a performance in the open air, was retained by Greek tragedy to the end of its career.

The platform on which, in former times, the leader of the chorus used to take his stand, while conversing with the rest of the singers, was now appropriated to the actor; and in the rear of it was erected a sort of booth to which he might retire for the purpose of changing his mask and costume[5]. This platform and booth eventually developed into the stage and background of the ancient and modern theatres; and the

ἤδη τὴν τραγῳδίαν κινεῖν; Suidas, v. *Φρύνιχος· μαθητὴς Θέσπιδος, τοῦ πρώτου τὴν τραγικὴν εἰσενέγκαντος* (cp. id. v. *Θέσπις*); Plat. Minos, 320 E *ἡ δὲ τραγῳδία ἐστὶ παλαιὸν ἐνθάδε, οὐχ ὡς οἴονται ἀπὸ Θέσπιδος ἀρξαμένη*; Cremer, Anecd. Gr. 4. p. 316; Marmor Par. ep. 43, &c., &c.

[1] The spuriousness of the three or four fragments which still exist under the name of Thespis was conclusively demonstrated by Bentley, Phalaris, p. 241 foll. It would appear, however, that some of his songs were still extant in the time of Aristophanes: cp. Vesp. 1478, 1479 *ὀρχούμενος τῆς νυκτὸς οὐδὲν παύεται | τἀρχαῖ' ἐκεῖν' οἷς Θέσπις ἠγωνίζετο.*

[2] Plut. Solon, c. 29 *ἐθεάσατο τὸν Θέσπιν αὐτὸν ὑποκρινόμενον, ὥσπερ ἔθος ἦν τοῖς παλαιοῖς.* Cp. Aristot. Rhet. 3. 1.

[3] Suidas, v. *Θέσπις.*

[4] Id. v. *Φρύνιχος.*

[5] The *σκηνή* must have been employed for the first time by Thespis, since it would not be required before the introduction of an actor.

theatrical 'scene' of the present day is the direct descendant of the old Thespian 'skênê' or hut. It is worthy of remark, however, that the background designed by Thespis was intended, not to represent the scene of the action, but merely as a place of retirement. The idea of painting the back of the stage so as to imitate the supposed locality of the drama was an invention of later times[1]; and the fact deserves attention as showing the gradual manner in which dramatic contrivances, though now apparently of the most obvious kind, were invented.

Little reliance can be placed on the statement of Horace, that Thespis was accustomed to 'carry his dramas about on waggons,' and that his actors used to 'smear their faces with wine-lees[2].' The latter fact is apparently due to a confusion between tragedy and comedy, since the comic actors were supposed, though erroneously, to have used wine-lees for the purpose of disguising their faces[3]. The story about the waggons is more difficult of explanation. To suppose that Thespis exhibited his plays from a waggon is inconsistent with everything else which is known about early Greek tragedy. If, again, all that is meant is that Thespis and his chorus used to drive about the country in carts to attend the rustic festivals, the matter seems too trivial to have called for record. Probably the 'waggons' of Horace, like his 'wine-lees,' were due to a confusion. It was the custom at the Anthesteria and the Lenaea for people to drive along the road in carts, addressing the bystanders with coarse raillery; and it is not unlikely that Horace, or rather his Greek authority, having confused the origin of tragedy and comedy, still further complicated the narrative by the introduction of these processional waggons[4].

To consider next the construction of a Thespian tragedy.

[1] Attic Theatre, p. 170.

[2] Hor. Ars Poet. 275–277 'ignotum tragicae genus invenisse Camenae | dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poëmata Thespis, | quae canerent agerentque peruncti faecibus ora.'

[3] Anon. de Comoed. (Dindorf's Aristoph. p. 23) *τὴν αὐτὴν δὲ (κωμῳδίαν) καὶ τρυγῳδίαν φασὶ . . . ὅτι μήπω προσωπείων ηὑρημένων τρυγὶ διαχρίοντες τὰ πρόσωπα ὑπεκρίνοντο.* The notion was suggested by the term *τρυγῳδία*, which really means the 'vintage-song.' See above, p. 13, note 1.

[4] Suidas v. *τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἁμαξῶν.*

The performance was naturally of a very simple character. First of all the actor came forward upon the platform, and delivered a speech containing preliminary explanations of the plot, this speech being called the 'prologue.' Then followed a series of choral odes, sung by the chorus in front of the platform. At each interval in the choral odes the actor again made his appearance, first in one character and then in another; and his part must have consisted, either in long narrative speeches, recounting events which had taken place elsewhere, or in dialogues with the leader of the chorus[1]. As there was only one actor, this was necessarily the case. But it is curious to notice that even in the later and more developed tragedy, when the number of the actors had been raised to three, the constituent elements of the Thespian drama—the formal

[1] Themistius, Or. 26, 316 D *οὐ προσέχομεν Ἀριστοτέλει ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὁ χορὸς εἰσιὼν ᾖδεν εἰς τοὺς θεούς, Θέσπις δὲ πρόλογόν τε καὶ ῥῆσιν ἐξεῦρεν.* Evanthius de Comoedia (p. 4 Reifferscheid), 'sed primo una persona est subducta cantoribus, quae respondens *ἀμοιβαίως* id est alternis choro locupletavit variavitque rem musicam.' The *πρόλογος* was all that part of a tragedy which preceded the entrance of the chorus (Aristot. Poet. c. 12). In the time of Thespis it must have consisted of a speech by the actor. *Ῥῆσις* was the regular name for the long set speeches which occurred in the course of the dialogue (Plut. Dem. c. 7). Hence the testimony of Aristotle and Evanthius, when combined, shows that the spoken part of the Thespian drama consisted of a 'prologue,' followed by long speeches addressed to the chorus, or dialogues between chorus and actor. The same conclusion might have been arrived at on *a priori* grounds, or from the evidence of the Supplices of Aeschylus, in which for the most part only one actor is employed.

Doubt has been thrown on the above quotation from Aristotle, because there is no mention of Thespis in the Poetics. But omissions in the Poetics are of no great significance. Many important matters are omitted there, e.g. the trilogy and the satyric drama. Possibly the treatise was never fully completed by Aristotle. Or it may have been completed in its original form, but condensed and mutilated by subsequent editors. In that case we might suppose that Thespis was mentioned in the original Poetics, and that the passage was afterwards excluded. In favour of this view is the fact that, in speaking of comedy (Poet. c. 4), Aristotle says that its history was less remembered than the history of tragedy; that no one, for example, could name the inventors of the '*comic* masks and prologues.' This statement seems to imply that he had already mentioned the inventors of the *tragic* masks and prologues. But even supposing that there was never any reference to Thespis in the Poetics, we need not therefore discredit the assertion of Themistius. He may have been quoting from other works of Aristotle, from the *περὶ ποιητῶν* or the *περὶ τραγῳδιῶν* (Diog. Laert. 5. 22 & 26).

prologue, the lengthy narrative speeches, and the dialogues between actor and chorus—were still preserved to a considerable extent, owing to the conservatism of the Greek stage.

As to the metrical form of these speeches and dialogues there is no positive evidence, and the question must be decided by conjecture. Before the time of Thespis the metre employed by the old dithyrambic poets in their spoken dialogues had been the trochaic tetrameter [1]. But within thirty or forty years of the death of Thespis we find the iambic trimeter firmly established as the predominant measure of the tragic dialogue. It is uncertain which of these two metres was adopted by Thespis, but the most plausible conclusion seems to be that he used both of them indifferently. He is hardly likely, on the one hand, to have abandoned the old trochaics altogether, since they were still occasionally revived even by his successors. On the other hand, if the iambics had not been introduced till after his death, it is difficult to suppose that they would have won universal acceptance within so short a time; and their employment by his contemporary Solon in several of his political poems proves their early popularity among the Athenians.

The discovery of the drama by Thespis is often ascribed to the influence of Epic poetry. It is said that the ancient rhapsodists were accustomed to combine together in order to give a dramatic recital of debates out of the Homeric poems, each rhapsodist taking a single part; and that these performances first suggested to Thespis the notion of a dramatic dialogue [2]. Unfortunately there is no evidence for the existence of recitations of this kind [3]. And though the influence of the

[1] See above, p. 20.

[2] Donaldson's Theatre of the Greeks, p. 33; Moulton's Ancient Classical Drama, p. 14.

[3] The passages quoted in support of this view are (1) Diog. Laërt. I. 57 *Σόλων δὲ τὰ Ὁμήρου ἐξ ὑποβολῆς ἔγραψε ῥαψῳδεῖσθαι, οἷον, ὅπου ὁ πρῶτος ἔληξεν, ἐκεῖθεν ἄρχεσθαι τὸν ἐχόμενον*; (2) Plat. Hipparch. 228 B *ἠνάγκασε τοὺς ῥαψῳδοὺς Παναθηναίοις ἐξ ὑπολήψεως ἐφεξῆς αὐτὰ διέναι*. The meaning is that the competing rhapsodists were made to recite *consecutive* portions of Homer, instead of selecting favourite passages at random. There is nothing about two or more rhapsodists joining in the same recitation. See Jebb's Homer, p. 77.

Epic upon the development of tragedy was undoubtedly of the most extensive character, this influence appears to have shown itself more in the inner tone and spirit of the drama, than in its outward form. The dialogue of the Thespian drama consisted, as already observed, partly of long narrative speeches addressed to the chorus, partly of conversations between chorus and actor. The conversations between chorus and actor were a direct development from the old dithyrambic interludes. Their characteristic feature, as shown by numerous specimens of the same kind in the later drama, was rapidity and conciseness, and a swift interchange of question and answer; and the style in which they were written, while suggestive of the lively discourse of satyrs, bore little resemblance to the grave debates of Homer. In the same way the descriptive speeches of Thespis would seem to have had no outward connexion with the epic poems, otherwise we should expect the hexameter to have been employed, at any rate occasionally, as the form of verse. But the universal prevalence of the iambic and trochaic measure suggests rather that the poems of Archilochus and his successors were the original models of the longer speeches of tragedy.

It was probably under the guidance of Thespis that the drama began to shake itself free from those narrow limitations of subject, to which it had hitherto been restricted by its association with the worship of Dionysus, and to choose its plots from the ampler field of general mythology, substituting at the same time a more varied chorus for the rustic troop of satyrs. This important change, which contributed as much as anything else to the advancement of tragedy, is assigned by Plutarch to a rather later epoch[1]. But Chamaeleon, the pupil

[1] Plut. Symp. I. I. 5 *ὥσπερ οὖν Φρυνίχου καὶ Αἰσχύλου τὴν τραγῳδίαν εἰς μύθους καὶ πάθη προαγόντων, ἐλέχθη· τί ταῦτα πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον*; Possibly, however, Phrynichus and Aeschylus are cited loosely as types of the earlier dramatists, and there is no significance in the omission of the name of Thespis. In fact, in another place Plutarch reckons among the chief glories of Athens the fact that she 'educated the Greeks by means of the tragedies of Thespis and Phrynichus' (de Glor. Athen. c. 7)—a passage which shows that, in his opinion, tragedy had already acquired some of its later dignity in the hands of Thespis.

of Aristotle, and a more reliable authority on points of this kind, appears to have ascribed it to Thespis; and the unanimity with which Thespis was regarded as the father of the tragic stage, seems to imply that his influence extended to the substance, as well as to the form, of the tragic drama[1]. Bentley, it is well known, took an opposite view, asserting that the plays of Thespis were mere sportive delineations of Bacchic subjects, and that his choruses were still composed of satyrs[2]. But the passages which he quotes, to the effect that tragedy was a 'rustic sport' before the time of Aeschylus, and that its elevation was the work of a 'late period,' while they prove the immeasurable superiority of Aeschylus, scarcely justify us in concluding that Thespis had made no advance, in the choice of subjects, upon the productions of his predecessors[3].

It would be interesting to know how far a story could be told in dramatic form by means of the appliances accessible to Thespis. The best solution of this question is to be found in the Supplices of Aeschylus, the earliest of extant Greek dramas, and one which, being written before Aeschylus had advanced very far in his dramatic innovations, approximates far more closely in structure to the compositions of Thespis, than to those of Sophocles and Euripides. More than half of it is choral, and the spoken part consists almost entirely of dialogues between the chorus and a single actor. The second actor, though introduced on two occasions, is used in such a sparing fashion, that with the alteration of about seventy lines he might be dispensed with altogether[4]. This play, therefore, with its archaic simplicity of arrangement, will serve in some degree as a substitute for the lost works of Thespis and his contemporaries; and it may be possible, by a detailed analysis of the

[1] Suidas, v. *οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον· τὸ πρόσθεν εἰς τὸν Διόνυσον γράφοντες τούτοις ἠγωνίζοντο, ἅπερ καὶ σατυρικὰ ἐλέγετο· ὕστερον δὲ μεταβάντες εἰς τὸ τραγῳδίας γράφειν κατὰ μικρὸν εἰς μύθους καὶ ἱστορίας ἐτράπησαν, μηκέτι τοῦ Διονύσου μνημονεύοντες· ὅθεν τοῦτο καὶ ἐπεφώνησαν. καὶ Χαμαιλέων ἐν τῷ περὶ Θέσπιδος τὰ παραπλήσια ἱστορεῖ.*

[2] Bentley's Phalaris, p. 243 foll.

[3] Anthol. Pal. 7. 411 *Θέσπιδος εὕρεμα τοῦτο· τάδ' ἀγροιῶτιν ἀν' ὕλαν | παίγνια, καὶ κώμους τούσδ' ἔτι μειοτέρους | Αἰσχύλος ἐξύψωσεν.* Aristot. Poet. c. 4 *ὀψὲ ἀπεσεμνύνθη.*

[4] ll. 474–497, 888–930.

plot, to form some conception of the methods of composition employed in the primitive drama.

The scene is laid near Argos, in an open space by the sea-shore. The fifty daughters of Danaus are seen crouching round an altar in supplication, having fled thither to avoid marriage with their fifty cousins. Danaus, their father, is standing beside them. The play begins with a prayer chanted by the maidens. Then follows a short conversation between them and their father on the state of their fortunes. Then the king of Argos appears upon the scene, and the maidens implore his protection. After a long and vivid dialogue the doubts and hesitations of the king are melted away by the passionate entreaties of the fugitives, and he promises to secure their safety. Danaus, who has been a silent spectator of this event, now thanks the king in a short speech, and retires to Argos to offer prayers to the gods. His presence throughout the scene was not really necessary, and might easily have been avoided by a poet who had only a single actor. The chorus, now left to themselves, sing a long hymn to Zeus; and then Danaus returns with the joyful tidings that the people of Argos have ratified the king's decision to protect them. An ode of thanksgiving follows, and then comes the crisis of the play. Danaus, in an agitated speech, informs his daughters that he descries out at sea the ship containing the fifty suitors, which is steering direct towards the shore. He retires to give the alarm, and the chorus break forth into an ode full of piteous lamentations. The herald of the suitors now advances upon the stage, and commands the maidens to follow him to the ship. His insolent threats and their terrified appeals for mercy constitute a most effective scene. Suddenly the king approaches, and here follows the only real dialogue between actors in the course of the tragedy. It consists of an acrimonious and violent debate between king and herald, ending in the discomfiture of the latter. In a play of the Thespian period this scene must have been eliminated, and a narrative by a messenger put in its place. After the retirement of the two combatants, the chorus gives expression to its joy in a short song; and then Danaus

returns to conduct them to Argos for greater security, and all withdraw together, invoking blessings upon their protectors.

This sketch shows how little alteration is required to convert the Supplices into a production of the earlier type. And though the excision of the scene between the king and the herald may seem a decided loss, yet even without this episode the play would be far from deficient in dramatic interest. It is clear then that the capacities of the drama, even as developed by Thespis, were not inconsiderable. But much still remained to be done. The performance was as yet more lyrical than dramatic; the plots lacked variety of incident; the spoken dialogues were little better than interludes; the choral songs and dances formed the principal attraction[1]. Though the plays of Thespis were greatly in advance of previous efforts, yet his importance is due, not so much to the excellence of the work which he himself produced, as to the ultimate results for which he paved the way.

§ 8. *Career of Thespis.*

Concerning the life of Thespis there is very little information. He was born, as previously stated, about the beginning of the sixth century. His early manhood must have been passed amid scenes of great political excitement. The whole country was at that time torn by civil dissensions, owing to the violent struggle for supremacy between three rival parties—between the rich landowners of the plains, the mercantile classes settled along the coast, and the hardy and impoverished farmers of the hill country. The last of these parties, which was called the 'Mountain,' followed the leadership of Pisistratus, who began his career by professing democratic principles[2]. It would naturally include among its adherents the natives of an upland town like Icaria; and this political connexion of Pisistratus with the birthplace of Thespis may possibly account in some measure for the patronage which he afterwards bestowed upon the rising drama.

[1] This may be gathered from Aristot. Poet. c. 4, where it is said that it was Aeschylus who first τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ ἠλάττωσε καὶ τὸν λόγον πρωταγωνιστὴν παρεσκεύασε, and that it was only in late times that ἐπεισοδίων πλήθη were added.

[2] Aristotle, Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία, c. 13.

For some time, no doubt, the poetical activity of Thespis would be confined to the neighbourhood of Icaria. But he must have begun to exhibit tragedies in Athens at any rate as early as the year 560[1]. His performances were, as yet, of a private and voluntary nature, without assistance or recognition from the state[2]. On one of these occasions Solon is said to have been present, and to have expressed his disapproval of the new form of art, and of the custom of counterfeiting the appearance of gods and heroes. When the performance was over he went up to Thespis, and asked if he was not ashamed to practise such deception. Thespis replied that he saw no great harm in the proceeding, if it was done merely for amusement. Then Solon, striking the ground with his staff, answered emphatically, that before very long the same deception would be introduced into the ordinary affairs of life. Not long afterwards Pisistratus made his first attempt upon the liberties of Athens. By means of self-inflicted wounds he persuaded the people that he was in danger of his life, induced them to entrust him with a body-guard, and so succeeded in establishing his tyranny. Solon, according to the tradition, was confirmed in his opinion by the fraud of Pisistratus, which he ascribed to the bad example set by Thespis[3].

Nothing further is recorded in the career of Thespis until the year 535, when public contests in tragedy were established for the first time at Athens, and Thespis himself took part in the competition[4]. At this date Pisistratus had just returned from his second exile, and commenced his final tyranny, which ended with his death in 527. His rule, though contrary to law, was otherwise mild and beneficial; and this last period of

[1] His earliest performances at Athens were before the first usurpation of Pisistratus in 560 (Plut. Solon, c. 29; Diog. Laërt. I. 59).

[2] Plut. Solon, c. 29 ἀρχομένων δὲ τῶν περὶ Θέσπιν ἤδη τὴν τραγῳδίαν κινεῖν, καὶ διὰ τὴν καινότητα τοὺς πολλοὺς ἄγοντος τοῦ πράγματος, οὔπω δὲ εἰς ἄμιλλαν ἐναγώνιον ἐξηγμένου.

[3] Ibid. c. 29; Diog. Laërt. I. 59.

[4] Marmor Par. ep. 43 ἀφ' οὗ Θέσπις ὁ ποιητὴς [ἐφάνη], πρῶτος ὃς ἐδίδαξε [δρ]ᾶ[μα ἐν ἄ]στ[ει]. The exact date is obliterated, but must fall between 542 and 520 B.C., the preceding and subsequent epochs. Suidas (v. Θέσπις) says ἐδίδαξε δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης καὶ ξ' ὀλυμπιάδος. This doubtless refers to his first appearance in a public contest, and therefore settles the date as the spring of 535 B.C.

his power was long remembered as a time of prosperity, and compared to the Golden Age[1]. He was careful to gratify the tastes of the people by the erection of splendid public buildings such as the temples of Apollo and Zeus; and by the organisation of magnificent ceremonials, such as the Greater Panathenaea[2]. He was also a patron of literature; he superintended the rearrangement of the Homeric poems; and his collection of manuscripts was famous throughout Greece[3]. Hence there can be little doubt that the institution of the public competitions in tragedy was carried out under his direct agency, partly perhaps in consequence of his old political association with the Icarians, but mainly to conciliate the people, and indulge his own tastes, by the establishment of a new kind of poetical entertainment. The scene of the contests was the City Dionysia—the great spring festival which continued ever afterwards to be the headquarters of tragedy[4]. This festival is known to have been of comparatively late origin, and may possibly have been founded by Pisistratus at this very time for the purpose of the dramatic exhibitions[5]. But whatever the date of its original creation, its splendour and magnificence were at any rate due to the new arrangements.

The year 535 was an eventful one for Thespis. In this year he saw his invention, the tragic drama, finally recognised by the state, and its permanence and future progress ensured by the establishment of the annual public competitions. After this date he disappears from history, and the time of his death is unknown. But as he was already an old man in 535, it is unlikely that he survived his patron Pisistratus.

[1] Aristot. Ἀθην. Πολ. c. 16.

[2] Suidas, vv. Πύθιον and Λύκειον; Aristot. Pol. 5. 11; Diog. Laërt. 1. 53; Aristid. p. 323 (Dindf.).

[3] Athen. p. 3; Paus. 7. 26.

[4] Tragedy at Athens was confined to the City Dionysia and the Lenaea. But at the Lenaea it occupied a subordinate position to comedy, while at the City Dionysia it was always the great feature of the festival (Attic Theatre, p. 37). Hence it must have been at the City Dionysia that it was first established. This fact is further proved by Marmor Par. ep. 43 πρῶτος δὲ ἐδίδαξε [δρ]ᾱ[μα ἐν ἄ]στ[ει], if the restoration is correct; since ἐν ἄστει was the regular term for a performance at the City Dionysia.

[5] Thucyd. 2. 15 calls the Anthesteria the ἀρχαιότερα Διονύσια, as opposed to the City Dionysia.

§ 9. *Choerilus, Pratinas, and Phrynichus.*

Between the death of Thespis and the rise of Aeschylus there was an interval of about thirty years, during which period the number of tragic poets must have been considerable, owing to the annual exhibition of plays. However only three names have been preserved—those of Choerilus, Pratinas, and Phrynichus. These three poets, though they all lived on into the fifth century, and were therefore contemporaries of Aeschylus during the latter part of their career, had nevertheless reached maturity and formed their style before the date of his appearance, and therefore belong more properly to the period which we are now considering. In their different ways they rendered important services to the stage. But in all that regards the evolution of tragedy from a choral into a dramatic performance, their influence was not conspicuous. They were content to follow closely in the lines of Thespis, and the drama, as composed by them, remained in that primitive or semi-choral state of development from which it was eventually delivered by Aeschylus[1].

Choerilus, the earliest of the trio, began to produce plays in 523[2]. In 499 he was one of the competitors whom Aeschylus encountered on the occasion of his first appearance upon the stage[3]. In 482 he was still at the height of his reputation[4]. He is said to have even competed against Sophocles; and if this statement is true he must have continued his poetical activity as late as the year 468[5]. He wrote 160 dramas and won thirteen victories; and considering the length of his career, and the fact that every poet exhibited four plays at a time, it is unnecessary to suppose that these numbers are exaggerated[6]. He was credited with certain improvements in the masks and dresses of the actors, and acquired special fame as a writer

[1] Aristot. Probl. 19. 31 διὰ τί οἱ περὶ Φρύνιχον μᾶλλον ἦσαν μελοποιοί; ἢ διὰ τὸ πολλαπλάσια εἶναι τότε τὰ μέλη τῶν μέτρων ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις.

[2] Suidas, v. Χοιρίλος.

[3] Id. v. Πρατίνας.

[4] Euseb. Chron. ol. 74. 2 Χοιρίλος καὶ Φρύνιχος ἐγνωρίζοντο.

[5] Vita Soph. p. 6 (Dindorf).

[6] Suidas, v. Χοιρίλος.

of satyric dramas[1]. One of his plays dealt with the subject of Alope, the maiden beloved by Poseidon[2]. Nothing now remains of his poetry, beyond his fanciful description of rocks and streams as the 'bones and veins of earth,'—a phrase which is often quoted by ancient critics as an example of forced and unnatural metaphor[3]. Otherwise his dramas appear to have soon passed into oblivion[4]. The statement that Sophocles wrote a prose treatise, criticising his use of the chorus, is too improbable to deserve credence, and appears to have arisen from some misunderstanding on the part of the grammarian[5].

Pratinas was a Dorian, and a native of Phlius, but exhibited plays at Athens[6]. His chief importance lies in the fact that he was the inventor of the satyric drama, which originated in the following manner[7]. We have seen that as early as the time of Thespis, tragedy, though performed in honour of Dionysus, and confined to his festivals, had begun to abandon the Bacchic legends in favour of a more diversified material. The people were not altogether satisfied, and exclaimed against the change as a slight upon the dignity of the god. At this juncture Pratinas appeared upon the scene. He came from the very centre of that Doric district, in which the dithyramb had been first cultivated with success, and in which the old tragic choruses of Arion, with their satyrs and their sportive merri-

[1] Suidas, v. Χοιρίλος. Plotius de Metris, p. 2633 (Putsch) ἡνίκα μὲν βασιλεὺς ἦν Χοιρίλος ἐν σατύροις. This line was regularly quoted as a specimen of the particular kind of metre, which was therefore probably called the Choerilium Metrum (Victorinus de Metris, p. 2558 Putsch).

[2] Nauck, Trag. Graec. p. 557.

[3] Nauck, l. c. ὥσπερ ποιεῖ Χοιρίλος καλῶν τοὺς λίθους γῆς ὀστᾶ, τοὺς ποταμοὺς γῆς φλέβας.

[4] The Choerilus mentioned in one of the fragments of Alexis, the comic poet, is apparently the author of the epic poem on the Persian war. See Meineke, Frag. Com. Graec. 3, pp. 443–445.

[5] Suidas, v. Σοφοκλῆς· καὶ λόγον καταλογάδην (ἔγραψεν) περὶ τοῦ χοροῦ, πρὸς Θέσπιν καὶ Χοιρίλον ἀγωνιζόμενος. The word ἀγωνιζόμενος would be more appropriate to a dramatic contest. If Sophocles had written a treatise on the use of the chorus in tragedy, he would have been more likely to direct his attention to Aeschylus, whose use of the chorus is very different from his own.

[6] Id. v. Πρατίνας.

[7] Id. l. c. καὶ πρῶτος ἔγραψε σατύρους. Cp. Acron on Hor. Ars Poet. 220. Hence Dioscorides describes satyric plays as 'from Phlius' (Anthol. Pal. 7. 707 ἐκισσοφόρησε γὰρ ἀνήρ | ἄξια Φλιασίων καὶ μὰ χοροὺς Σατύρων).

ment, still maintained an existence. Hence his mind would be impregnated with ancient traditions. Accordingly on coming to Athens he proceeded to produce plays composed in the primitive fashion, with satyrs for chorus, and with subjects of a humorous character. His innovation speedily became popular, as it satisfied the religious conservatism of the people; and the 'satyric plays' of Pratinas were henceforth adopted as a regular branch of art, and included by express ordinance in the programme of the festival[1]. The style of these compositions was essentially archaic. At the same time it would be a mistake to suppose that they were a mere revival of the old Bacchic choruses; they were rather a combination of those choruses with the ordinary Attic tragedy. Their structure was much the same as in a tragic drama, their subjects were equally varied, their principal characters hardly less heroic; in fact, the Dionysiac element was confined mainly to the chorus, which consisted in every case of satyrs[2]. The result was a strange medley of refinement and grossness, heroes and satyrs fraternising together, and graceful language alternating with the coarsest humour. The exposure of tragedy in the midst of

[1] Zenobius (5. 40) says that dithyrambs were formerly written on the subject of Dionysus, but when they began to be extended to other legends, the people exclaimed *οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον*. He adds, *διὰ γοῦν τοῦτο ὕστερον ἔδοξεν αὐτοῖς τοὺς σατύρους προεισάγειν, ἵνα μὴ δοκῶσιν ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ*. The word *προεισάγειν* is no doubt the correct reading, though it is inaccurate. When satyric plays were first introduced, they came *after* the tragedies (Attic Theatre, pp. 19–21). But in the fourth century their position was altered, and they were placed at the *beginning* of the festival (ib. p. 27); and it is to this later custom that the author of the above statement refers when he uses the word *προεισάγειν*. There is no need for the conj. *προσεισάγειν*.

The ancient writers generally agree in ascribing the origin of the proverb *οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον* to the extended range of tragedy. But they differ as to the time and place in which it arose. They say it originated (1) at Sicyon in the time of Epigenes, (2) in the time of Thespis, (3) in the time of Phrynichus and Aeschylus (Suidas, v. *οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον*; Plut. Symp. 1. 1. 5). But the period of Phrynichus and Aeschylus is certainly too late (see above, p. 33). As to the Sicyonians, they had been accustomed from early times to have dithyrambs on the subject of Adrastus, instead of Dionysus, without making any complaint (see p. 23, n. 1). It is probable therefore that if the phrase originated in the way described, it arose in the time of Thespis. At any rate it expresses the attitude of the Athenians towards the innovations of Thespis and his successors.

[2] See chap. v. section 10.

these incongruous surroundings was well compared by Horace to the position of a modest matron, whom custom compelled to dance in public at some religious festival[1].

Few details have been preserved about the life of Pratinas. He is known to have competed against Aeschylus in 499, and he must have died before 467, since in that year one of his posthumous plays was produced by his son Aristias[2]. He is said to have written eighteen tragedies and thirty-two satyric dramas, but was not very successful in the competitions, as he only won a single victory[3]. Still, as a writer in the 'satyric' style he was placed second to Aeschylus alone[4]. Of his plays nothing has been preserved beyond a couple of titles[5]. But a considerable fragment from one of his odes is still extant, and gives us a high idea of his lyrical powers. The passage contains a vehement protest against the encroachments of instrumental music, and the growing habit of overpowering the voices of the singers; and the fervour of the language, and wild luxuriance of the versification, appear to reflect the very spirit of the old dithyrambic choruses[6].

Phrynichus, the son of Polyphradmon, was the most famous of the tragic poets before Aeschylus[7]. He is called the 'pupil'

[1] Hor. Ars Poet. 231–233 'effutire leves indigna Tragoedia versus, | ut festis matrona moveri iussa diebus, | intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.'

[2] Suidas, v. Πρατίνας; Arg. Aesch. Sept.

[3] Suidas, l. c. The proportion of eighteen tragedies to thirty-two satyric dramas is difficult to reconcile with the regulation which compelled each poet at the City Dionysia to exhibit three tragedies and one satyric play. We must therefore suppose either (1) that the numbers are incorrect, or (2) that the regulation had not come into force during the earlier part of the career of Pratinas, or (3) that the numbers represent the plays of Pratinas which were *preserved* in later times. Owing to his fame as a satyric poet, his satyric plays would naturally be preserved in greater numbers than his tragedies.

[4] Paus. 3. 13. 5.

[5] The Δύσμαιναι ἢ Καρυάτιδες and the Παλαισταὶ σάτυροι (Nauck, p. 726).

[6] Athen. p. 617 B τίς ὁ θόρυβος ὅδε; τί τάδε τὰ χορεύματα; | τίς ὕβρις ἔμολεν ἐπὶ Διονυσιάδα πολυπάταγα θυμέλαν; | ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ὁ Βρόμιος· ἐμὲ δεῖ κελαδεῖν, ἐμὲ δεῖ παταγεῖν | ἀν' ὄρεα σύμενον μετὰ Ναϊάδων, | οἷά τε κύκνον ἄγοντα ποικιλόπτερον μέλος· | τὰν ἀοιδὰν κατέστασε Πιερὶς βασίλειαν· ὁ δ' αὐλὸς | ὕστερον χορευέτω· καὶ γὰρ ἐσθ' ὑπηρέτας. | κώμῳ μόνον θυραμάχοις τε πυγμαχίαισι νέων θέλει παροίνων | ἔμμεναι στρατηλάτας. | παῦε τὸν Φρύγ' ἀοιδοῦ | ποικίλου προαχέοντα κ.τ.λ.

[7] Suidas (s. v.) says he was the son of Polyphradmon, or of Minyras, or of

of Thespis, whose footsteps he followed[1]. He obtained his first tragic victory in 511, and is known to have been again victorious in 476, when Themistocles acted as his choregus[2]. He is described by Aristophanes as beautiful in person and dress, and as a writer of beautiful dramas[3]. The date of his death is unknown. He left a son called Polyphradmon, who was also a tragic poet[4].

From the titles of his plays which have been preserved it is evident that he covered a wide range of subjects, being especially attracted by striking incidents[5]. But his most daring

Chorocles. But Polyphradmon appears to be the right name, as is shown by Schol. Aristoph. Av. 750, and Paus. 10. 31. 2; and also by the fact that he had a son called Polyphradmon (Suidas s. v.; Arg. Aesch. Sept.).

Suidas also mentions another tragic poet of the same name, viz. Phrynichus the son of Melanthas, author of the Andromeda and Erigone, and composer of pyrrhic dances. Bentley (Phalaris, p. 260) and most scholars have identified him with Phrynichus the son of Polyphradmon, on the strength of a passage in Schol. Aristoph. Vesp. 1481. But this passage turns out to be an interpolation from Suidas (see Dindorf ad loc.), and is not found in the MSS. Moreover the Andromeda and Erigone are never cited among the plays of Phrynichus the son of Polyphradmon.

In addition to these two tragic poets there were at least four other well-known persons of the same name, viz. (1) the comic poet, (2) the general who commanded at Samos, (3) the actor, (4) the dancer (Schol. Aristoph. Av. 750, Nub. 1092; Andoc. de Myst. § 47). Hence much confusion among the grammarians. Thus Chorocles, given by Suidas as possibly the father of the tragic poet Phrynichus, was really the father of the *actor*.

As a result of this confusion the following facts have been erroneously related of Phrynichus the son of Polyphradmon: (1) that he died in Sicily (Anon. de Comoed. p. 23 Dindf.)—a confusion with the *comic* poet; (2) that he was chosen general because of his military dances (Ael. Var. Hist. 3. 8)—a confusion with the *general* who commanded at Samos; (3) the παλαίσματα Φρυνίχου (Aristoph. Ran. 689), i. e. the intrigues of Phrynichus the *general* in connexion with the Four Hundred, were explained to mean the wrestling-bouts in the Antaeus of the tragic poet (Schol. ad loc.).

[1] Μαθητὴς Θέσπιδος (Suidas, v. Φρύνιχος).

[2] Suidas, l. c.; Plut. Themist. c. 5.

[3] Aristoph. Thesm. 164–166.

[4] Suidas, v. Φρύνιχος.

[5] The names of the following plays (see Nauck, p. 720, Suid. v. Φρύνιχος) have been preserved: 1. Ἄλκηστις. 2. Ἀνταῖος ἢ Λίβυες. 3. Ἀκταίων. 4. Δαναΐδες. 5. Αἰγύπτιοι (probably concerned, like the preceding play, with the fortunes of the daughters of Danaus). 6. Τάνταλος. 7. Πλευρωνίαι (dealing with the fate of Meleager). 8. Φοίνισσαι (subject, the Persian War). 9. Μιλήτου Ἅλωσις (subject, the Ionic revolt). 10. Δίκαιοι ἢ Πέρσαι ἢ Σύνθωκοι. The last play, with its triple title, is mentioned only by Suidas, and has been variously explained. Possibly the Πέρσαι was the same as the Μιλήτου Ἅλωσις; and the Δίκαιοι and Σύνθωκοι were alternative names for the Φοίνισσαι, and denoted the

innovation was the attempt to dramatise contemporary history. It was only a few years since the tragic poets had ventured to make their first excursions beyond the limits of the Bacchic fables, and even this experiment had been regarded with some suspicion. But to abandon mythology altogether, and to endeavour to create a historical drama, must have seemed to the Greeks of that period an undertaking of extraordinary boldness. His earliest essay of this kind was in connexion with the Ionic revolt, in which the Athenians had taken a rather inglorious part. The rebellion ended in 494 with the capture and destruction of Miletus; and Phrynichus founded on this incident a tragedy of such a pathetic character, that the Athenians were melted to tears by the spectacle. But soon afterwards they fined the poet a thousand drachmas, for thus reminding them of the sufferings of their kinsfolk, and prohibited the future reproduction of the play[1]. Phrynichus, however, was not deterred by this punishment, but later on wrote another historical play, the Phoenissae, on the subject of the Persian War; and his second effort, as it commemorated the victory of the Greeks, and not their defeat, was more successful than the first[2]. It need hardly be pointed out that these 'historical' plays of Phrynichus, with their scanty dialogues and lengthy choral odes, can have had little in common with modern dramas of the same species; and their purpose must have been, not so much to exhibit the actual events of history, as to express in lyrical form the passions which those events had excited.

In the production of his tragedies, Phrynichus paid special attention to the dances of the chorus, and boasts in one of his poems that the new postures and movements which he invented were as numerous and varied as the waves upon a stormy sea[3].

Persian Elders who are known to have taken part in it (Nauck, p. 722).

[1] Herod. 6. 21. The play is generally cited as the Μιλήτου Ἅλωσις. But the language of Herodotus (ποιήσαντι δρᾶμα Μιλήτου ἅλωσιν) does not necessarily imply any more than that the *subject* of the play was the capture of Miletus. As a name for a tragedy Μιλήτου Ἅλωσις would be very exceptional (see chap. V, § 11). Possibly the real name of the play was the Πέρσαι (see the previous note).

[2] Argum. Aesch. Pers.; Nauck, p. 722.

[3] Plut. Quaest. Symp. 8. 9. 3 σχήματα δ' ὄρχησις τόσα μοι πόρεν, ὅσσ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ | κύματα ποιεῖται χείματι νὺξ ἀλοή. Hence,

He also has the reputation of being the first dramatist to employ female masks[1]. But his chief merit consisted in the increased dignity and pathos which he imparted to tragedy, and in the extreme beauty of his lyrical odes. Hence he was often reckoned as one of the founders of the tragic drama, and his influence upon his immediate successors was considerable[2]. Thus Aeschylus took the scheme of his Persae from the Phoenissae of Phrynichus; and in the well-known scene of the Frogs he speaks of him as his great predecessor in choral poetry, whose lyrics, though differing in style from his own, were no less noble in their kind[3]. Sophocles admired and occasionally imitated him[4]. Aristophanes, while ridiculing some extravagancies of language, bestows the warmest praise upon his choral odes, which he compares to the notes of the nightingale, 'from whom, like a bee, Phrynichus sipped the fruit of heavenly melodies, ever bearing away the load of sweetest music[5].' He long retained his popularity, and even as late as the Peloponnesian War old men were fond of singing his compositions, and especially the famous ode of the maidens in the Phoenissae[6]. In the scanty fragments of his poetry which still remain there is a distinct grace and beauty of expression; and the loss of his plays is much to be deplored, not only for their interest as specimens of the early drama, but also because of their intrinsic excellence[7].

like Thespis and Pratinas, he was called an *ὀρχηστής* (Athen. p. 22).

[1] Suidas, v. *Φρύνιχος*, who adds *καὶ εὑρετὴς τοῦ τετραμέτρου ἐγένετο*, which is obviously incorrect. The trochaic tetrameter was the old metre of tragedy (Aristot. Poet. c. 4).

[2] Plat. Minos 320 E; Plut. Symp. 1. 1. 5, de Glor. Athen. c. 7.

[3] Argum. Aesch. Pers.; Aristoph. Ran. 1298–1300 *ἀλλ' οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐς τὸ καλὸν ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ | ἤνεγκον αὖθ', ἵνα μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν Φρυνίχῳ | λειμῶνα Μουσῶν ἱερὸν ὀφθείην δρέπων.*

[4] In Athen. p. 604 Sophocles quotes with approval the line of Phrynichus *λάμπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφυρέαις παρῃσι φῶς ἔρωτος*, which he appears to have imitated in Antig. 783 *ὃς ἐν μαλακαῖς παρειαῖς | νεάνιδος ἐννυχεύεις.*

[5] Aristoph. Av. 748–751 *ἔνθεν ὥσπερεὶ μέλιττα | Φρύνιχος ἀμβροσίων μελέων ἀπεβόσκετο καρπόν, | ἀεὶ φέρων γλυκεῖαν ᾠδάν.* In Vesp. 1490 the words *πτήσσει Φρύνιχος ὥς τις ἀλέκτωρ* are a parody on the line of Phrynichus *ἕπτης' ἀλέκτωρ δοῦλον ὡς κλίνας πτερόν.* Cp. 1492 *σκέλος οὐράνιόν γ' ἐκλακτίζων*, and 1521 *καὶ τὸ Φρυνίχειον | ἐκλακτισάτω τις*, in ridicule of the word *ἐκλακτίζειν*, used by Phrynichus.

[6] Id. Vesp. 220.

[7] Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. pp. 720–725.

CHAPTER II.

AESCHYLUS.

§ 1. *His Life.*

AESCHYLUS, the son of Euphorion, was born in the year 525[1]. His family belonged to the class of the Eupatridae—the old Attic nobility, whose political power had been overthrown by Solon, but who still retained, along with certain priestly offices and functions, much of their original dignity[2]. His father's home was at Eleusis, a town celebrated throughout Greece for its connexion with the worship of Demeter[3]. Here he passed the greater part of his boyhood and youth; and the various imposing ceremonies which he must have witnessed every year at the celebration of the mysteries—the torchlight procession, the march along the sacred road, and the solemn initiation by night—would make a deep impression upon the feelings of a poet whose mind was naturally of a religious bent. The extent of this influence is alluded to in the Frogs, where Aeschylus, when about to contend with Euripides for the supremacy in tragedy, begins by addressing his prayers to Demeter, and entreats the goddess who 'nourished his youthful

[1] From Suidas (v. Αἰσχύλος) it appears that he was twenty-five when he exhibited in the March of 499. According to Marmor Par. ep. 48 he was thirty-five at the battle of Marathon (September of 490). Thus his birth would fall between March and September of 525. Marmor Par. ep. 59 agrees with the above dates, placing his death at the age of sixty-nine in 456. The statement in the Life, that he was born in the fortieth Olympiad (561 B.C.) and died aged sixty-three, is plainly wrong; as is also the assertion of Suidas (l. c.) that he died at the age of fifty-eight.

[2] Vit. Aesch. ἐξ εὐπατριδῶν τὴν φύσιν.

[3] Ibid.

soul' to grant that he may 'prove himself worthy of her mysteries[1].'

A dramatic poet is more dependent upon external surroundings, for the opportunity of developing his natural gifts, than any other kind of writer. The quality of his plays must always be to a large extent determined by the character of his audiences. However great his genius, it is impossible that he should unfold its full capacities upon the stage, if he fails to awaken any responsive sympathy in the minds of his hearers. It was the happy fortune of Aeschylus to be born among a people that was capable of appreciating and stimulating his powers. He lived in an age of great thoughts and great deeds. In his youth he was a witness of that marvellous expansion of Athenian energy and enthusiasm, which followed upon the expulsion of the Pisistratidae, and the establishment of the democracy under Cleisthenes, and which is described in such emphatic terms by Herodotus[2]. His manhood coincided with the most glorious period of Athenian history—the period of the two Persian wars. In both campaigns he took an active part. At Marathon he and his brother Cynegeirus fought with such conspicuous bravery, that their valour was commemorated by the insertion of their portraits in the celebrated picture of the battle which was afterwards erected in the Porch at Athens[3]. In the second invasion he was present in person at all the most

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 886 *Δήμητερ ἡ θρέψασα τὴν ἐμὴν φρένα, | εἶναί με τῶν σῶν ἄξιον μυστηρίων.* See Schol. ad loc.

[2] Herod. 5. 78.

[3] Heracleides Ponticus, quoted by Eustratius on Aristot. Eth. Nicom. 3. 2; Harrison and Verrall, Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens, p. 137. Cynegeirus, when the Persians were trying to escape in their fleet, seized the stern of one of the vessels, and refused to relax his grasp till his hand was cut off with an axe. Herodotus, who also gives the story about Cynegeirus (6. 114), merely calls him the 'son of Euphorion,' and says nothing about his being brother of Aeschylus. But this is hardly a sufficient reason for doubting the relationship.

The Vita Aesch. and Diod. Sic. 11. 27 also say that the Ameinias who won the prize of valour at Salamis, and was the first to attack the hostile fleet, was brother of Aeschylus. But Herod. 8. 84 calls this Ameinias *Παλληνεύς*, while Aeschylus and his family belonged to Eleusis. Probably therefore there was no connexion between the two. Aeschylus may have had a brother called Ameinias, and he may have been erroneously identified in later times with the Ameinias who distinguished himself at Marathon.

important contests—at Artemisium, Salamis, and Plataea[1]. The influence of these great events is manifest in the lofty tone of his dramas; and the strength, energy, and grandeur which they display are not unworthy of the generation which conquered the Persians, and laid the foundations of Athenian supremacy.

According to an old tradition Aeschylus used to declare that, while he was still a boy, and was passing the night in the fields in order to keep watch over his father's vineyards, Dionysus appeared to him in a vision and ordered him to write a tragedy; and that his first attempts at dramatic composition were made in obedience to this divine command[2]. Whatever the truth of the story, he began his career as a tragic poet at an early age. His first public exhibition of plays was in 499, and the year was rendered memorable by the collapse of the wooden benches on which the spectators were sitting, and the consequent erection of a stone theatre[3]. For the space of forty-one years, from 499 to 458, he continued to write dramas for the Athenian stage, exhibiting on the average every alternate year[4]. The total number of his plays was about ninety[5].

His greatness was not fully recognised at first, and he had to wait fifteen years before he obtained a victory[6]. But after once

[1] Vit. Aesch.; Paus. 1. 14. 4; Schol. Aesch. Pers. 429 (quotation from Ion of Chios).

[2] Paus. 1. 21. 3.

[3] Suidas, vv. Αἰσχύλος, Πρατίνας.

[4] The Orestean trilogy, exhibited in 458 B.C., was his last production in the Athenian theatre (Argum. Agam.; Vit. Aesch. p. 4 Dindorf). As the total number of his plays was about ninety, and as every tragic poet exhibited four plays at a time, he must have engaged in rather more than twenty competitions.

[5] Suidas (v. Αἰσχύλος) gives the number as ninety, which is probably correct. The Catalogue of Aeschylus' plays in the Medicean MS. gives only seventy-one, if we exclude the Αἰτναῖαι νύθοι. But nine plays are known to be omitted (probably through the negligence of the copyists rather than owing to the defectiveness of the original list), viz. Ἀλκμήνη, Γλαῦκος Ποτνιεύς, Θαλαμοποιοί, Ἱέρειαι, Παλαμήδης, Σίσυφος πετροκυλιστής, Φινεύς, Ὠρείθυια, Προμηθεὺς πυρκαεύς. Thus we have the names of at least eighty plays.

The Life states the number as about seventy-five (ἐποίησε δράματα ο', καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις σατυρικὰ ἀμφὶ τὰ πέντε). But seventy-five are obviously too few; and the meaningless contrast between δράματα and σατυρικά, and the absurdly small number of the satyric plays, would seem to show that the reading is corrupt, though any emendation must be quite conjectural.

[6] Marmor Par. ep. 50 places the date of his first victory in 484 B.C.

establishing his position as the favourite poet of the Athenians, he retained it without much interruption to the end of his career. In the twenty-six years which elapsed between his first success in 484 and his final appearance in 458, he won no less than thirteen victories—a fact which proves him to have been successful in most of the contests in which he engaged [1]. Still he was defeated by the youthful Sophocles in 468 [2]. But his failure on that occasion was an altogether exceptional occurrence, which caused a great sensation at the time.

In addition to his dramas he also occasionally wrote elegies, of which some fragments have been preserved [3]. But in the opinion of the ancients his style was hardly suited to the delicacy and tenderness of this kind of poetry; and his elegy on the soldiers slain at Marathon, which he composed for a public competition, was surpassed by the rival production of Simonides [4].

Of the few recorded incidents in the life of Aeschylus one of the best known is his trial on the charge of impiety. He was exhibiting a play in which, according to ancient fashion, he took the principal part himself, and in which there happened to be some mention of the worship of Demeter. When he began to speak about the goddess, the people suddenly conceived a suspicion that he was revealing the mysteries, and in the first impulse of their fury would have killed him on the spot, had he not rushed down from the stage to the orchestra, clung to the altar of Dionysus for protection, and so managed to save his life. Shortly afterwards he was charged with the offence before the Council of the Areopagus, defended himself

[1] Vita Aesch. *νίκας δὲ τὰς πάσας εἴληφε τρισκαίδεκα, οὐκ ὀλίγας δὲ μετὰ τελευτὴν νίκας ἀπηνέγκατο.* Suidas (v. Αἰσχύλος) says twenty-eight. The discrepancy may perhaps be explained by supposing that the larger number includes the victories won by Aeschylus after his death. He is known to have been victorious with the Persae, &c., in 472 (Argum. Pers.), with the Theban trilogy in 467 (Argum. Sept.), and with the Orestean trilogy in 458 (Argum. Agam.). Another victory, of uncertain date, is recorded in Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 971.

[2] Plut. Cimon, 8.

[3] Bergk, Poetae Lyrici Graeci, p. 570.

[4] Vita Aesch. p. 4 (Dindorf) *τὸ γὰρ ἐλεγεῖον πολὺ τῆς περὶ τὸ συμπαθὲς λεπτότητος μετέχειν θέλει, ὃ τοῦ Αἰσχύλου, ὡς ἔφαμεν, ἐστὶν ἀλλότριον.*

on the plea of ignorance, and was eventually acquitted. But his escape was due, not so much to any belief in his innocence, as to the recollection of the valour which he and his brother had displayed at Marathon. Such is the earliest version of the story, and there seems to be no sufficient reason to doubt its authenticity[1]. Later writers add various inaccurate details, and endeavour to specify the name of the play on which the charge was based; but their statements are mere guesses, without historical value[2]. The date of the trial, though nowhere mentioned, must have been soon after the first Persian invasion, when the memory of Marathon was still recent.

Aeschylus is known to have visited Sicily on at least three occasions. He came there originally about 476, at the invitation of Hieron the tyrant of Syracuse, who was then founding a new town called Aetna, in honour of which event Aeschylus composed and exhibited a local drama called the Women of Aetna[3]. He was again in Sicily soon after 472, when he gave a performance of his Persae in Syracuse at the request of Hieron[4]. His connexion with the island was not terminated by the death of Hieron, since he passed the two last years of his life at Gela, where he died and was buried[5].

[1] Aristot. Eth. Nicom. 3. 2 ἢ οὐκ εἰδέναι ὅτι ἀπόρρητα ἦν, ὥσπερ Αἰσχύλος τὰ μυστικά. Eustratius, in his note on this passage, quotes from Heracleides Ponticus (ἐν τῷ πράτῳ περὶ Ὁμήρου) the story given in the text.

[2] Thus Clemens Alexandrinus (Strom. 2, p. 387) says that Aeschylus defended himself by showing that he had never been initiated—an incorrect variation of the statement that he did not know ὅτι ἀπόρρητα ἦν. Aelian (V. H. 5. 9) says that the people were about to stone Aeschylus to death *at the trial*, but that his brother Ameinias saved him by displaying the arm which had been mutilated at Salamis. Here there is a triple error: (1) the outbreak of popular fury is placed at the trial, instead of in the theatre, (2) Ameinias, who began the attack at Salamis, is erroneously supposed to have been Aeschylus' brother, (3) he is confused with Cynegeirus, who lost his hand at Marathon (see p. 47, note 3).

Eustratius (on Aristot. Eth. Nicom. 3. 2) says that Aeschylus 'appears to have revealed the mysteries' in his Τοξότιδες, Ἱέρειαι, Σίσυφος πετροκυλιστής, Ἰφιγένεια and Οἰδίπους. Apsines (Rhet. Gr. 1, p. 340, ed. Spengel) supposes the play to have been the Eumenides. But (1) there is nothing in the extant play which looks like a revelation of the mysteries, (2) we can hardly suppose that Aeschylus would have won the first prize with a play which caused such an outbreak of popular fury.

[3] Vita Aesch. p. 4 Dindf.

[4] Ibid. p. 4; Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 1060.

[5] Epitaph on Aeschylus (Bergk, Lyric

Though these three visits are the only ones expressly mentioned by ancient writers, it is unnecessary to suppose that they exhaust the list, and there are many indications which point to a lengthy and continuous residence in Sicily. Thus Macrobius calls Aeschylus a 'thorough Sicilian'; the grammarians notice the frequency of Sicilian words in his tragedies; and Epicharmus, the Sicilian poet, is said to have ridiculed his bombastic phraseology—a fact which shows that he was a well-known personage at Syracuse[1]. Probably, therefore, he spent the greater part of his later years in Sicily. But, if so, he must have frequently revisited Athens for theatrical purposes, to superintend the production of his plays.

The critics, both ancient and modern, have exercised their ingenuity without much success, in endeavouring to find a motive for this withdrawal to Sicily. Some of the old biographers say that he was banished by the Athenians, either because of the collapse of the wooden benches in the theatre in 499, or because of the terror inspired by his chorus of Furies in 458[2]. The alleged reasons, however, are not only puerile in themselves, but are proved by their very date to have had no connexion with a retirement which began in 476[3]. Moreover the departure of Aeschylus was plainly a voluntary act, since an exile would never have been permitted to continue to produce plays in the Athenian theatre[4]. Others again say that he left Athens in a fit of jealous ill-humour, owing to his defeat by Sophocles in the theatre, or by Simonides in the matter of the

Graeci, p. 571) *καταφθίμενον πυροφόροιο Γέλας*. Suidas, v. *Αἰσχύλος*; Plut. Cimon, c. 8. The author of the Life (p. 4) confuses his *first* visit to Sicily in 476 with his *last* visit in 458. After describing his *first* visit, and the production of the Women of Aetna, he adds *ἐπιζήσας τρίτον ἔτος ὢν γηραιὸς ἐτελεύτα . . . ἀποθανόντα δὲ Γελῶοι θάψαντες κ.τ.λ.*

[1] Macrob. Sat. 5. 19. 17 'Aeschylus tragicus, vir utique Siculus.' Athen. p. 402. Schol. Aesch. Eum. 626 *τιμαλφούμενον· συνεχὲς τὸ ὄνομα παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ, δι' ὃ σκώπτει αὐτὸν Ἐπίχαρμος.*

[2] Vita Aesch. p. 4; Suidas, v. *Αἰσχύλος.*

[3] It is also absurd to suppose that the *poet* should have been held responsible for the faulty construction of the benches, or that he should have been exiled on account of a play with which at the same time he won the first prize.

[4] Cp. Plut. de Exil. c. 13, who mentions Aeschylus as an example of those who *μηδενὸς ἀναγκάζοντος αὐτοὶ μεθορμίσαντο τοὺς βίους καὶ μετέστησαν, οἱ μὲν εἰς Ἀθήνας, οἱ δ' ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν.*

elegy[1]. But here again the dates are incompatible with any such hypothesis, since the elegy over the soldiers who fell at Marathon must have been composed soon after 490, and the victory of Sophocles occurred in 468. And the success of Sophocles was so far from rankling in the heart of Aeschylus, or acting as a discouragement, that in the very next year he produced his Oedipodean tetralogy, with which he was victorious[2]. Indeed, if we may trust the allusions in the Frogs, the relation between the two poets was one of cordial friendship and respect[3].

The modern suggestions are not much more plausible. It has been supposed that the trial for impiety, though it ended in acquittal, left behind it a certain soreness and mutual mistrust between Aeschylus and the Athenians, and that this was the reason of his leaving Athens[4]. But this theory of the existence of an undercurrent of suspicion and dislike between Aeschylus and his countrymen cannot be supported by reliable testimony[5]. It is inconsistent, also, with the genuine enthusiasm of his references to Athens in the Eumenides; and it is disproved by the almost invariable success of his later productions, and

[1] Plut. Cimon, c. 8; Vita Aesch. p. 4 Dindf.

[2] Argum. Aesch. Septem.

[3] Aristoph. Ran. 786 foll., ΞΑ. *κἄπειτα πῶς | οὐ καὶ Σοφοκλέης ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου;* | ΑΙ. *μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλ' ἔκνισε μὲν Αἰσχύλον, | ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθε, κἀνέβαλε τὴν δεξιάν, | κἀκεῖνος ὑπεχώρησεν αὐτῷ τοῦ θρόνου· | νυνὶ δ' ἔμελλεν, ὡς ἔφη Κλειδημίδης, | ἕφεδρος καθεδεῖσθαι· κἂν μὲν Αἰσχύλος κρατῇ, | ἕξειν κατὰ χώραν· εἰ δὲ μή, περὶ τῆς τέχνης | διαγωνιεῖσθ' ἔφασκε πρός γ' Εὐριπίδην.*

[4] Sittl, Gesch. der Griech. Lit. 3, p. 246. Cp. for similar views in ancient times, the epitaph on Aeschylus by Diodorus (Anthol. Pal. 7. 40) *τίς φθόνος ἀστῶν | Θησείδας ἀγαθῶν ἔγκοτος αἰὲν ἔχει;*

[5] The passages quoted in support of this view are (1) Athen. p. 347, where Aeschylus, indignant at his defeat in some contest, *ἔφη χρόνῳ τὰς τραγῳδίας ἀνατιθέναι, εἰδὼς ὅτι κομεῖται τὴν προσήκουσαν τιμήν.* But a remark of this kind is hardly sufficient to prove that he was permanently embittered against the Athenians. (2) Aristoph. Ran. 805 foll., where Aeschylus refuses to accept the Athenians as judges in the tragic contest in Hades (*οὔτε γὰρ Ἀθηναίοισι συνέβαιν' Αἰσχύλος*). But as he immediately adds that the rest of mankind are worthless as critics of poetry (*λῆρόν τε τἄλλ' ἡγεῖτο τοῦ γνῶναι περὶ | φύσεις ποιητῶν*), his words cannot be regarded as displaying any special contempt for the Athenians. Probably, however, the whole passage merely embodies the feelings of Aristophanes himself concerning the bad taste of his contemporaries, who preferred Euripides to Aeschylus.

by the extraordinary honours bestowed upon him at his death. Nor is there any more likelihood in the suggestion that he was driven from Athens by his detestation of the democratic tendencies of the age[1]. As a matter of fact the period of his retirement was a period of aristocratic reaction, the Areopagus having then acquired the supreme direction of affairs; and it was not till 462, shortly before his death, that the decisive advance of democracy began[2].

In spite of the various conjectures of the critics, it is not really necessary to suppose that the motives which brought Aeschylus to Sicily were in any way exceptional. In complying with the invitation of Hieron, and taking up his residence at Syracuse, he was only doing what several other poets of that period, such as Pindar and Simonides, had already done. Possibly at first he had no intention of making Sicily his permanent place of abode, but was afterwards attracted by the climate or by other similar considerations. At any rate, if there was any deeper purpose underlying his conduct, it is fruitless after this lapse of time to endeavour to trace it.

The first half of the fifth century was one of the most important epochs in the political history of Athens; and it would be interesting to know the feelings with which Aeschylus regarded the great events and changes which then took place. Unfortunately, the only source of information is that supplied by the seven extant plays, in which the allusions to passing politics are vague and scanty, Aeschylus, like the other great tragic poets of Greece, preferring to enunciate his views in the form of universal truths and maxims, rather than by specific references to contemporary affairs. Still, the slightness of the materials has not prevented scholars from producing various theories on the subject. Their conjectures, however, must be received with caution; and it is essential, in considering this

[1] Christ, Gesch. der Griech. Lit. p. 179.

[2] Aristot. Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία, c. 23 μετὰ δὲ τὰ Μηδικὰ πάλιν ἴσχυσεν ἡ ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ βουλὴ καὶ διῴκει τὴν πόλιν. Ibid. c. 25 ἔτη δὲ ἑπτὰ καὶ δέκα μάλιστα μετὰ τὰ Μηδικὰ διέμεινεν ἡ πολιτεία προεστώτων τῶν Ἀρεοπαγιτῶν. Ibid. c. 26 μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα (the overthrow of the Areopagus in 462) συνέβαινεν ἀνίεσθαι μᾶλλον τὴν πολιτείαν διὰ τοὺς προθύμως δημαγωγοῦντας.

question, to carefully discriminate between fact and hypothesis, and to beware of ascribing to the wide and comprehensive language of poetry a more definite application than was ever intended by the author.

There are certainly no grounds for supposing that Aeschylus in his political leanings was a vehement partisan. Attempts have been made to connect him with the rivalries of Aristeides and Themistocles. These two statesmen, in the period which followed the Persian War, divided Athens into factions, though the reasons for their opposition, apart from mere personal emulation, are not fully known. It is a common opinion, however, that the conversion of Athens from a land power into a naval power, and the consequent establishment of her supremacy in the Aegean, were essentially the policy of Themistocles; and that Aristeides, with more conservative instincts, opposed the expansion, and was supported in his opposition by Aeschylus[1]. But recent discoveries would show that Aristeides was as much concerned as Themistocles in extending the dominion of Athens[2]. And the passages which are cited to prove the attachment of Aeschylus to the party of Aristeides are far too abstract and general in their character to justify any such inference[3]. The notion, too, that Aeschylus regretted the

[1] Müller, Dissertation on the Eumenides, p. 79; Grote, vol. iv, p. 397.

[2] Aristot. Ἀθην. Πολ. c. 24 (Ἀριστείδης) *συνεβούλευεν ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῆς ἡγεμονίας καὶ καταβάντας ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν οἰκεῖν ἐν τῷ ἄστει κ.τ.λ.*

[3] The passages are (1) Septem 592–594 *οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει, | βαθεῖαν ἄλοκα διὰ φρενὸς καρπούμενος, | ἐξ ἧς τὰ κεδνὰ βλαστάνει βουλεύματα.* These lines are supposed to have been written as a panegyric on Aristeides. But though there was a tradition that when they were spoken in the theatre, the people turned instinctively to Aristeides, and applied them to him (Plut. Aristeid. c. 3), there is nothing to show that they were composed with this intention by Aeschylus.

(2) Persae 348 *θεοὶ πόλιν σώζουσι Παλλάδος θεᾶς· | ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἕρκος ἐστὶν ἐσφαλές.* Müller's notion (Diss. on Eumenides, p. 79) that this passage was meant to ridicule the Long Walls of Themistocles, by showing that men were of more importance than mere fortifications, is obviously nothing but a fanciful conjecture.

(3) Müller suggests (Diss. p. 79) that in the account of the battle of Salamis in the Persae, the description of the slaughter on Psyttaleia was inserted with the express purpose of exalting Aristeides, who conducted the operation, at the expense of Themistocles. But the main battle, which was the work of Themistocles, is described by Aeschylus at much greater length.

extension of Athenian naval power is rebutted by the patriotic speech in the Eumenides, where Athene refers in glowing language to the splendid future of Athens, and prophesies that 'in the time to come she shall attain to much greater glory than she now possesses[1].' These words, written about the middle of the fifth century, must refer principally to the foundation of the Athenian Empire in the Aegean; and it is difficult to believe that the poet would have expressed himself in such terms, if he had disapproved of the naval policy by which that empire was established.

As to his general views on political matters, Aeschylus, in spite of his connexion with Hieron, shared in the universal abhorrence of tyrannical government. The whole of the Prometheus Vinctus is coloured with this feeling. A similar spirit pervades the splendid dialogue in the Persae, where Atossa asks the chorus who is the lord and master of the Athenians, and the chorus reply that they are 'slaves and subjects to no man[2].' Aeschylus likewise recognises the fact that the people, in the ultimate resort, must be the supreme power in the state. He speaks of them as the 'governors of the city[3].' Throughout the Supplices he dwells with obvious sympathy on the caution of the Argive king, in refusing to come to any decision, 'sovereign though he be,' until he has consulted the popular assembly[4]. The people he describes as occasionally censorious, but generous in disposition, and inclined to mercy[5]. These and similar passages are a sufficient proof that he had none of that deep-rooted prejudice against popular forms of government with which he is often credited[6].

At the same time it is certain that he would never have

[1] Eum. 853 foll. *οὐπιρρέων γὰρ τιμώτερος χρόνος | ἔσται πολίταις τοῖσδε κ.τ.λ.*

[2] Persae 242.

[3] Suppl. 699 *τὸ δάμιον, τὸ πτόλιν κρατύνει.*

[4] Ib. 398 *εἶπον δὲ καὶ πρίν, οὐκ ἄνευ δήμου τάδε | πράξαιμ' ἄν, οὐδέπερ κρατῶν.* Cp. 365 foll. *οὗτοι κάθησθε δωμάτων ἐφέστιοι | ἐμῶν· τὸ κοινὸν δ' εἰ μαίνεται πόλις, | ξυνῇ μελέσθω λαὸς ἐκπονεῖν ἄκη. | ἐγὼ δ' ἂν οὐ κραίνοιμ' ὑπόσχεσιν πάρος, | ἀστοῖς δὲ πᾶσι τῶνδε κοιρώσας πέρι.*

[5] Ib. 485–489.

[6] Cp. Müller's Dissertation, p. 80, where the line *τραχύς γε μέντοι δῆμος ἐκφυγὼν κακά* (Septem 1044) is quoted as a proof of the anti-democratic spirit of Aeschylus.

looked with approval on the extreme type of democracy which eventually prevailed in Athens; and he evidently regarded with alarm the political tendency of his closing years. No doubt he derived from his ancestors a certain vein of aristocratic sentiment, and some trace of this feeling may be found in his remark that old families are kinder to their slaves than families whose wealth is of recent origin[1]. But the clearest statement of his political creed occurs in the Eumenides, in the well-known eulogy of the Areopagus. This aristocratic council had governed Athens for seventeen years, after the termination of the Persian War. But in 462, at the instigation of Ephialtes and the democratic party, it was stripped of its political power, and reduced to the position of a mere criminal court, with jurisdiction in cases of homicide and arson[2]. Four years afterwards Aeschylus produced his Eumenides. Athene is there represented as founding the Council of the Areopagus, and the language in which she refers to it is full of significance. She describes it as the 'bulwark of the country,' and the 'safeguard of the city'; as a 'watchful sentry over the sleeping citizens,' which will check injustice by day and night, provided the people do not themselves alter the laws and drive all fear out of the state[3]. These utterances clearly indicate the repugnance felt by Aeschylus for the innovations of Ephialtes. The Areopagus which he here holds up for admiration is not a mere court of justice, such as Ephialtes left it, but a deliberative assembly watching over the general safety of the state. Some such institution was evidently, in his opinion, essential to the preservation of order. Though a friend of liberty, he was reluctant to entrust the citizens with absolute and unrestricted power. The democracy which he desired to see estab-

[1] Agam. 1043–1045 ἀρχαιοπλούτων δεσποτῶν πολλὴ χάρις. | οἱ δ' οὔποτ' ἐλπίσαντες ἥμησαν καλῶς, | ὠμοί τε δούλοις πάντα καὶ παρὰ στάθμην.

[2] Aristot. Ἀθην. Πολ. cc. 25 and 57.

[3] Eum. 681–706 . . . κερδῶν ἄθικτον τοῦτο βουλευτήριον | αἰδοῖον, ὀξύθυμον, εὐδόντων ὕπερ | ἐγρηγορὸς φρούρημα γῆς καθίσταμαι . . . ἐν δὲ τῷ σέβας | ἀστῶν, φόβος τε συγγενὴς τὸ μὰ δικεῖν | σχήσει, τό τ' ἦμαρ καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην δμῶς, | αὐτῶν πολιτῶν μὴ 'πικαινούντων νόμους. . . . τοιόνδε τοι παρβοῦντες ἐνδίκως σέβας, | ἔρυμά τε χώρας καὶ πόλεως σωτήριον | ἔχοιτ' ἂν οἷον οὔτις ἀνθρώπων ἔχει | οὔτ' ἐν Σκύθαισιν κ.τ.λ.

lished was one of a modified kind, in which, though the people might be the ultimate masters, the administration of affairs was carried on by a select assembly not removable by popular caprice. In such a combination he hoped to find safety from the 'despotism' of tyrants and oligarchies on the one hand, and from the 'anarchy' of unlimited popular control on the other[1].

His views being of this moderate character, he was able to look on the strife of parties with an unprejudiced eye, and to recognise the good qualities in each of the opposing forces. A proof of his impartiality, and of his freedom from the bigotry of partisanship, is supplied by this same play of the Eumenides. Shortly before its production Ephialtes and the popular party, in spite of the efforts of the aristocracy, had succeeded in withdrawing Athens from alliance with the oligarchic Sparta, and had concluded a treaty with the more democratic Argos. But Aeschylus was so far from condemning all measures which came from the popular side, or from allowing his judgement to be warped by the conduct of Ephialtes in regard to the Areopagus, that he alludes to the newly-made treaty in terms of the warmest sympathy and approval[2]. There could be no surer testimony to his fairness and breadth of mind.

A few anecdotes about Aeschylus have been collected from various sources. One of the most interesting of these is his reply to the Delphians, when he was asked to write a paean in honour of Apollo, and refused to do so on the ground that every one would prefer the antique poem of Tynnichus to his own; just as they considered the old-fashioned images of the gods to be far more venerable than the best of modern statues[3]. In addition to this story Plutarch has preserved a remark of his on the value of training, which was occasioned by the bravery of one of the boxers at the Isthmian games[4]. There

[1] Eum. 699–701 *τὸ μήτ' ἄναρχον μήτε δεσποτούμενον | ἀστοῖς περιστέλλουσι βουλεύω σέβειν, | καὶ μὴ τὸ δεινὸν πᾶν πόλεως ἔξω βαλεῖν.*

[2] Ib. 762–776.

[3] Porphyr. de Abst. 2. 133.

[4] Plut. de Profect. in Virt. c. 8 *Αἰσχύλος μὲν γὰρ Ἰσθμοῖ θεώμενος ἀγῶνα πυκτῶν, ἐπεὶ πληγέντος ἑτέρου τὸ θέατρον ἐξέκραγε, νύξας Ἴωνα τὸν Χῖον, ὁρᾷς, ἔφη, οἷον ἡ ἄσκησίς ἐστιν; ὁ πεπληγὼς σιωπᾷ, οἱ δὲ θεώμενοι βοῶσι.* This story was probably taken from the Memoirs of Ion of Chios, which are known to have

is also the tradition, recorded by many authors, that he wrote his dramas under the influence of wine[1]. But this rumour probably derived its origin from the connexion of ancient tragedy with the worship of the wine-god.

Aeschylus died at Gela in 456, in the seventieth year of his age[2]. According to the usual account he was sitting in the open air, engaged in writing, when an eagle, mistaking his bald head for a stone, dropped a tortoise upon it in order to break the shell, and so killed him[3]. This narrative used formerly to be regarded by most people as the fabrication of the biographers, who were unwilling that a poet so great as Aeschylus should be thought to have died in an ordinary manner. Others, however, explained it as due to a misunderstanding of some symbolical sculpture on the tomb of Aeschylus, in which they supposed an eagle to have been represented flying upwards with a tortoise, to denote the 'ascent of the lyre to heaven on the wings of poetry[4].' But it has recently been pointed out that the story of a bald man being killed by the fall of a tortoise was already current in the fifth century, though the name of the man had not then been specified[5]. Whence it would seem that the tale about Aeschylus was not exactly a pure invention, but that it came in course of time to be inserted in his biography, owing to his having been erroneously identified, because of his baldness, with the victim of the popular fable.

He was buried by the people of Gela in the public tombs

abounded in personal anecdotes and recollections (cp. Athen. p. 603).

[1] Plut. Quaest. Symp. 7. 10. Athen. p. 428. Lucian, Enc. Dem. 15.

[2] Marmor Par. ep. 59.

[3] Vita Aesch. p. 5 (Dindorf); Aelian, Nat. An. 7. 16; Suidas (v. Αἰσχύλος). The story occurs for the first time in Sotades, the Alexandrian poet of the third century B.C. (quoted by Stobaeus, Flor. 98. 9. 13 Αἰσχύλῳ γράφοντι ἐπιπέπτωκε χελώνη).

[4] Göttling, Opusc. Acad. p. 230 foll. Bergk (Griech. Lit. 3, p. 283) thinks that as eagles were supposed to be healed by tortoise-flesh (Oppian, Ἰξευτικά, p. 107), the meaning of the sculpture was that Aeschylus by death was delivered from evil.

[5] Rohde, Jarhb. für class. Philologie, 121, p. 22. He quotes the following passage from Simplicius (fol. 74 a), ἐκεῖνος γὰρ (i.e. Democritus, flor. 460–357 B.C.) ἐν τοῖς μερικωτέροις οὐδενὸς φησὶν εἶναι τὴν τύχην αἰτίαν, ἀναφέρων εἰς ἄλλας αἰτίας· οἷον τοῦ θησαυρὸν εὑρεῖν τὸ σκάπτειν . . . τοῦ δὲ καταγῆναι τοῦ φαλακροῦ τὸ κρανίον τὸν αἰετὸν βίψαντα τὴν χελώνην ὅπως τὸ χελώνιον βαγῇ.

with great pomp and magnificence[1]; and over his grave was inscribed the following epitaph:—

> This tomb the dust of Aeschylus doth hide,
> Euphorion's son, and fruitful Gela's pride.
> How tried his valour Marathon may tell,
> And long-haired Medes who knew it all too well[2].

These lines are said to have been written by Aeschylus himself, and probably with truth; since no other person, in composing his epitaph, would have failed to make some allusion to his fame as a dramatist[3]. His memory was held in the highest honour by subsequent generations, and tragic poets used to visit his tomb and offer sacrifices there[4]. Moreover the Athenians passed a special law to authorise the reproduction of his tragedies at the annual competitions, which had hitherto been confined exclusively to new plays[5]; and this distinction, which was never conferred on any other poet during the fifth century, is a convincing proof of the veneration which his genius had inspired.

Two portraits of Aeschylus are known to have existed in antiquity—the likeness inserted in the public painting of the battle of Marathon, and the statue erected in the Athenian theatre towards the close of the fourth century[6]. In modern times the only certain representation of the poet which we possess is an engraving on a gem (fig. 3), which depicts his death, but which is too small to be of much interest[7]. A bust in the Capitoline Museum (fig. 4), is usually supposed to be

[1] Vita Aesch. p. 5 Dindf.

[2] Bergk, Poet. Lyr. p. 571 *Αἰσχύλον Εὐφορίωνος Ἀθηναῖον τόδε κεύθει | μνῆμα καταφθίμενον πυροφόροιο Γέλας· | ἀλκὴν δ' εὐδόκιμον Μαραθώνιον ἄλσος ἂν εἴποι | καὶ βαθυχαιτήεις Μῆδος ἐπιστάμενος.* The translation is from Plumptre's Aeschylus.

[3] The epitaph is ascribed to Aeschylus by Athenaeus (p. 627) and Pausanias (1. 14. 5). In the Life (p. 5) it is simply said that it was 'inscribed on his tomb by the people of Gela.'

[4] Vita Aesch. p. 5.

[5] Hence his boast in Aristoph. Ran. 868 *ὅτι ἡ ποίησις οὐχὶ συντέθνηκέ μοι.* See Schol. ad loc.; and also Schol. Acharn. 10. In this way Aeschylus won several victories in competitions after his death (Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. p. 220 Kayser; Vita Aesch. p. 5). His son Euphorion was four times successful with plays written by his father (Suidas, v. *Εὐφορίων*).

[6] Paus. 1. 21. 1; Plut. X Orat. 841 F.

[7] The copy of the gem is taken from Baumeister's Denkmäler, 1, p. 34.

a portrait of Aeschylus on the following grounds[1]. It is admittedly the work of the fifth century; it represents a bald man of thoughtful aspect, thus corresponding with the ancient descriptions[2]; and it bears a general resemblance to the figure of Aeschylus in the gem. These reasons, no doubt, give

FIG. 3.

a certain plausibility to the identification, but are manifestly far from conclusive.

§ 2. *Improvements in Tragedy.*

Aeschylus, if we consider the variety and significance of the work which he accomplished, appears to have been one of the greatest poetic geniuses that the world has ever seen. The influence which he exercised upon the growth of Greek tragedy was so powerful and decisive, that he was often regarded as its

[1] The copy is from the cast in the Oxford University Galleries.

[2] The description (Aristoph. Ran. 822 foll.) of Aeschylus preparing for the contest is sometimes quoted in reference to this matter—*φρίξας δ' αὐτοκόμου λοφιᾶς λασιαύχενα χαίταν, | δεινὸν ἐπισκύνιον ξυνάγων κ.τ.λ.* But the language, as the Scholiast points out, is merely metaphorical, and need not invalidate the tradition that Aeschylus was a bald man.

FIG. 4. AESCHYLUS

second founder[1]. In the hands of Thespis and his successors the drama had scarcely advanced beyond the embryonic stage, and its future was still uncertain. Aeschylus, in the course of a single generation, expanded and developed its latent capacities with such masterly power and such completeness of result, that its general character was henceforth finally settled, and the task of subsequent poets became comparatively easy. His activity was not confined to any one branch of theatrical representation, but covered the entire field, and effected an equal transformation in the structure, the spirit, and the external appearance of tragedy. It will be convenient, therefore, to consider his dramatic innovations under these three heads successively.

(1) *The Structure of the Aeschylean Drama.*

First, as to the structure of his plays. The most important element in every dramatic action is the conflict of opposing principles. The object of the dramatist is to bring together characters representing divergent aims and tendencies, and to exhibit them in actual collision upon the stage; and the intensity of the interest excited by the drama is mainly due to this play and interchange of rival passions and ambitions. Now in the old tragedies of Thespis and Phrynichus, as there was only a single actor, it was impossible to produce this effect, or to represent the actual encounter of the contending forces. The supreme crisis of the action, instead of being exhibited before the eyes of the spectators, had to be unfolded indirectly by means of narratives, or conversations between witnesses. Aeschylus was the first to conceive the possibility of depicting in dramatic form the central incidents of the story, and he effected his purpose by the employment of a second actor[2]. By this expedient he was enabled for the first time to bring the chief antagonists face to face, and to expose them to view in the very act of contention; thus imparting to the drama that energy and vitality in which it had previously been deficient.

[1] Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. p. 220 (Kayser) ὅθεν Ἀθηναῖοι πατέρα μὲν αὐτὸν τῆς τραγῳδίας ἡγοῦντο.

[2] Aristot. Poet. c. 4 καὶ τό τε τῶν ὑποκριτῶν πλῆθος ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς δύο πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος ἤγαγε.

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This introduction of a second actor naturally led to a complete change in the composition of tragedy, and was no less momentous in its results than the invention of the first actor by Thespis. Hitherto the component parts of every play had consisted either of long choral odes, or of narratives addressed to the chorus, or of conversations between the chorus and the actor. The chorus had been the principal figure throughout the performance. But these old methods of exposition, which were epic and lyrical in tone, rather than dramatic, were now to a large extent replaced by vivid and lively dialogues between the pair of actors. The centre of interest was transferred from the orchestra to the stage. The chorus, being no longer necessary to the conduct of the piece, steadily declined in importance. Its odes were diminished in length; its share in the dialogue was curtailed; and its former position of leading agent in the plot was exchanged for the passive role of a spectator[1].

It must not, however, be supposed that these reforms were accomplished all at once, or that Aeschylus realised from the first the full importance of the change he was introducing. On the contrary, it is easy to discern, in his extant tragedies, the gradual manner in which he felt his way along from one improvement to another. On comparing the individual plays together, we perceive the dramatic element slowly encroaching upon the epic and lyrical, and the significance of the actors increasing, while the significance of the chorus diminishes. His first dramas were no doubt written in the old fashion, for performance by a single actor. Even in the Supplices, the earliest of his extant works, though a second actor had now

[1] Aristot. l. c. *καὶ τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ ἠλάττωσε καὶ τὸν λόγον πρωταγωνιστὴν παρεσκεύασεν.* Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. p. 219 (Kayser) *τὴν τέχνην δὲ ὁρῶν ἀκατάσκευόν τε καὶ μήπω κεκοσμημένην εἰ μὲν ξυνέστειλε τοὺς χορὸς ἀποτάδην ὄντας, ἢ τὰς τῶν ὑποκριτῶν ἀντιλέξεις εὗρε παραιτησάμενος τὸ τῶν μονῳδιῶν μῆκος κ.τ.λ.* In the Vit. Soph. (p. 11, Kayser) Philostratus says that Aeschylus was the first to introduce *ἄγγελοι καὶ ἐξάγγελοι*, and to decide *ἃ ἐπὶ σκηνῆς τε καὶ ὑπὸ σκηνῆς χρὴ πράττειν.* But this would appear to be an exaggeration. The use of messengers' speeches, and the revelation of events by means of narration rather than of actual exhibition on the stage, must have been even more important in the early drama, with its single actor, than in the dramas of Aeschylus.

been introduced, he is rarely employed; and the whole play, as pointed out in the previous chapter, differs little in point of structure from the Thespian model[1]. There is only a single scene of animated dialogue between the two actors. The sons of Aegyptus, who constitute the hostile element in the drama, are never introduced, or brought into active conflict with their opponents. The chorus monopolises the attention of the audience; and the occasional appearances of the characters upon the stage merely serve to diversify the course of the long lyrical odes.

The next tragedies in order of time are the Persae and the Septem; and they hold an intermediate place as regards dramatic construction between the Supplices and the later compositions. The chorus still has an intimate connexion with the plot. The Persian elders are as much concerned as Xerxes and Atossa in the ruin of the Persian army; and the fate of the Theban maidens is dependent upon the issue of the conflict between the brothers. But in neither play is the interest concentrated upon the chorus, as in the Supplices. Moreover the choral odes are greatly reduced in length, and the dialogue proportionately increased. There is still, however, no attempt to exhibit the main crisis of the action, or to bring the opposing elements into actual collision. Polyneices, in the Septem, never appears upon the scene; and in the Persae the great conflict between Persians and Greeks has already been concluded before the action commences. The scene, in each case, is laid at a distance from the place in which the fortunes of the combatants are really decided; and the course of events is made known chiefly by the narratives of witnesses, or by the songs of the chorus. The epic and lyrical elements still preponderate, and the principal features in both plays are the descriptions of battles and rival champions, and the lamentations of innocent victims.

The Prometheus, one of the poet's latest productions, shows a considerable advance upon the plays already mentioned.

[1] See above, p. 34.

The choral part is here reduced to very small dimensions. But more significant than the mere length of the choral odes is the fact that the chorus now for the first time begins to assume that conventional and subordinate role which it fills in the dramas of Sophocles and Euripides. It no longer possesses any personal interest or concern in the evolution of the plot, but simply acts the part of a sympathetic witness, offering advice and consolation to the principal character, and filling up the pauses in the action with general reflections upon the events which have taken place. Again, in the Prometheus we are brought face to face with the actual crisis, and witness the struggle with our own eyes, instead of being told of it at second hand. We see Prometheus chained to the rock by the ministers of Zeus; we listen to his angry controversy with Hermes, in which he hurls defiance at the tyrant; and we hear the rolling of the thunder which announces his approaching doom. But the influence of the older drama is still very manifest. The central portion of the play consists merely of narratives, in which the action makes no progress; and the long recital of the benefactions of Prometheus, and of the wanderings of Io, recalls the descriptive scenes in the Persae and the Septem.

In the three plays which compose the Orestean trilogy, the art of Aeschylus reaches its culminating point. The essential qualities of dramatic representation are here realised much more fully than even in the Prometheus. The plots are disclosed in a series of vivid scenes, abounding in the direct delineation of conflicting passions and antagonisms. Agamemnon is confronted with Clytaemnestra, Clytaemnestra with Orestes. Orestes and Apollo encounter the Furies face to face. The dialogue, as a rule, is marked by intense life and movement and dramatic force. A third actor is occasionally employed, after the fashion recently set by Sophocles, and adds much to the variety and interest of the action upon the stage. The chorus, also, in two at least of the three plays, occupies the same subordinate position as in the Prometheus; and the elders in the Agamemnon, and the maidens in the Choephori, have only a remote connexion with the plot. In the Eumenides,

it is true, the chorus of Furies plays a much more significant part, and their hostility to Orestes forms the basis of the tragedy. But even here the main action takes place upon the stage; and the prominence given to the actor's parts—to the parts of Orestes, Apollo, and Athene—is much greater than would have been the case if the play had been written at an earlier date.

But in spite of its general maturity of style, the Oresteia has still many points in common with the antique kind of drama. The first portion of the Agamemnon is mainly narrative, consisting of long choral odes about the Trojan war, and descriptions of the beacon-fire and of the homeward voyage; and during this part of the play the action is practically at a standstill. Again, in all three plays, the frequency of the dialogues between actor and chorus is very noticeable. It appears then from these examples that Aeschylus, even in his latest tragedies, still clung in many instances to the older forms. Compared with the dramas of Sophocles and Euripides the most elaborate of his productions seem somewhat archaic. But when we consider the enormous interval, in dramatic intensity and constructive power, between the Oresteia and the Supplices, the wonder is that a single poet should have achieved so much, rather than that he should have halted where he did.

(2) *General Tone.*

The most obvious characteristic in the poetry of Aeschylus, and that which first strikes the attention of every reader, is its grandeur, and loftiness, and massive strength. His dramas are colossal creations, planned and executed with a largeness of design and a depth of purpose to which it would be difficult to find any parallel. Every part of the composition, from the plots and characters to the language and versification, is fashioned on the same imposing scale, and the effect of the whole is to impress the mind with a sense of unapproachable power and majesty. But there is no point in which this elevation of treatment manifests itself more conspicuously than

in the profound and intense earnestness of the moral tone. Though the seven extant tragedies of Aeschylus deal with subjects of the most diverse kind—from the history of the Persian war to the marriage of the Aegyptian maidens—one unvarying motive dominates them all. The justice of Providence, the unrelenting power of fate, and the dire effects of crime and wickedness, are the ideas which form the key-note of every scene. Human beings, throughout his plays, appear as creatures of comparatively small importance. Their characters and passions are treated, less as objects of interest in themselves, than as materials for exhibiting the working of the divine laws. The purpose of Aeschylus is not, like that of other dramatists, to analyse the complex machinery of the human mind, but to reveal the relation in which men stand to the universal order of things, and to teach them how to read the mysterious decrees of destiny, and to adjust their actions to the will of Providence.

The words which are attributed to Aeschylus, in the Frogs of Aristophanes, express in eloquent language his conception of the character and functions of tragic poetry. The office of the dramatist, he is there made to say, is a lofty and responsible one. His duty is to make the citizens braver, nobler, more generous and more virtuous than he found them; to inspire them with valiant thoughts and exalted aspirations. Hence the characters he exhibits should be great and heroic, so as to excite their emulation, and serve as worthy examples of conduct. Women such as Phaedra and Stheneboea are unfit to be represented on the tragic stage. Legends of a vicious and effeminate type should be avoided by the poet, and passed over in silence, as they are useless for any good purpose[1].

It was in this spirit that Aeschylus set himself to dramatise the fables of the ancient mythology. In his hands their nature is transformed. Though the mere facts are preserved with as much care as possible, the characters are invested with ideal grandeur and strength, and the story acquires a depth and significance of meaning to which it had formerly no pretension.

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1006–1073.

Take, for example, his treatment of the fable of Prometheus. As related by Hesiod it is a childish tale of deceit and trickery[1]. Prometheus first teaches men, by means of fraud, to cheat Zeus out of the best part of the sacrifice. Zeus in revenge deprives them of fire. Then Prometheus steals the fire from heaven, and restores it to mankind, and for this deed is chained to a rock in the Caucasus. Out of this apparently insignificant myth Aeschylus, by the touch of his genius, has created one of the sublimest pictures that has ever been painted of resistance to oppression and unselfish devotion to humanity.

The grandeur of conception and loftiness of aim with which Aeschylus treated his dramatic subjects marked the commencement of a new epoch in the history of Greek tragedy, and led to a revolution in its tone and spirit, similar to that which was produced in England by Marlowe, but more lasting and profound. The efforts of Thespis had already, it is true, begun to give a more serious colouring to the half-sportive character of the ancient choruses; but his reforms had not gone very far. It was Aeschylus who first associated the name of tragedy with ideas of grandeur, and solemnity, and religious depth. His example was never altogether lost sight of by his successors. All the existing remains of Greek tragedy bear the imprint of his genius, and are marked, though in varying degrees, by a certain earnestness and ethical impressiveness which differentiate them from the dramas of other countries.

(3) *The Manner of Representation.*

We now come to the improvements introduced by Aeschylus in the more strictly theatrical part of the drama. Aeschylus, like the older poets generally, was actor and stage-manager as well as author, and not only wrote his plays, but also superintended their production, and took the leading part himself[2]. The originality and creative power which he displayed in this portion of his work were no less striking than his originality as

[1] Hesiod. Theogon. 521–568.

[2] Athen. p. 21 Χαμαιλέων γοῦν πρῶτον αὐτόν φησι . . . καὶ ὅλως πᾶσαν τὴν τῆς τραγῳδίας οἰκονομίαν εἰς ἑαυτὸν περιστῶν· ὑπεκρίνετο γοῦν μετὰ τοῦ εἰκότος τὰ δράματα. See the Attic Theatre, p. 80.

a poet. We have seen that he was the first to inspire the old legends with a spirit of tragic grandeur and solemnity. In order to make the actual performance correspondingly impressive, he invented a special costume for the tragic actors, by which he gave them an appearance of superhuman dignity. He raised their height and increased their bulk by means of paddings and thick wooden soles. He clothed them in long flowing garments, adorned with brilliant ornamentation, and shining with every variety of colour. He covered their heads with masks of a gloomy and awe-inspiring aspect. So successful and appropriate were his innovations, that the tragic dress, as designed by him, continued without intermission for nearly eight hundred years to be the conventional costume of the Greek theatre[1].

The stage itself, which before the time of Aeschylus had been merely a small platform for a single actor, must have been extended in size under his direction, so as to accommodate the two actors and their attendants, and admit of the occasional presence of the chorus[2]. Whether he invented the use of painted scenery is uncertain[3]. But in any case he was the first to pay attention to spectacular effect, and to decorate the stage with altars, statues, tombs, and other scenic properties[4]. The various mechanical contrivances of the Greek stage were also ascribed by popular tradition to Aeschylus[5].

[1] Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. p. 220 (Kayser) *ἐνθυμηθεὶς δὲ καὶ τὴν τέχνην, ὡς προσφυῶ τῷ μεγαλείῳ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ καταβεβλημένῳ τε καὶ ὑπὸ πόδα, σκευοποιίας μὲν ἥψατο εἰκασμένης τοῖς τῶν ἡρώων εἴδεσιν, ὀκρίβαντος δὲ τοὺς ὑποκριτὰς ἐνεβίβασεν, ὡς ἴσα ἐκείνοις βαίνοιεν, ἐσθήμασί τε πρῶτος ἐκόσμησεν, ἃ πρόσφορον ἥρωσί τε καὶ ἡρωΐσιν ἡσθῆσθαι.* Suidas (v. Αἰσχύλος) *οὗτος πρῶτος εὗρε προσωπεῖα δεινὰ καὶ χρώμασι κεχρισμένα ἔχειν τοὺς τραγικούς.* Cp. also Athen. p. 21; Hor. Ars Poet. 278–280; Vita Aesch. (pp. 2, 6 and 7 Dindorf).

[2] Hor. Ars Poet. 278–280 'post hunc personae pallaeque repertor honestae | Aeschylus et modicis instravit pulpita tignis | et docuit magnumque loqui nitique cothurno.' The *modica tigna* of Horace may perhaps embody some tradition as to the diminutive height of the Aeschylean stage, compared with the twelve-foot stage of the later period.

[3] The invention is ascribed to Aeschylus by Vitruvius (praef. lib. 7), and to Sophocles by Aristotle (Poet. c. 4).

[4] Vita Aesch. p. 6 (Dindorf) *πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος . . . τὴν σκηνὴν ἐκόσμησε καὶ τὴν ὄψιν τῶν θεωμένων κατέπληξε τῇ λαμπρότητι, γραφαῖς καὶ μηχαναῖς, βωμοῖς τε καὶ τάφοις κ.τ.λ.*

[5] Cramer, Anecd. Par. I. 19 *εἰ μὲν δὴ πάντα τις Αἰσχύλῳ βούλεται τὰ περὶ τὴν*

Of these, however, some appear to have been the invention of Sophocles, others were of later date[1]. Still we can hardly be mistaken in crediting Aeschylus with the discovery of those particular pieces of machinery which he is known to have made use of in his own plays. To this class belong the 'crane' and the 'machine' by which actors were floated through the air, the 'theologeion' which exhibited the gods in heaven, and the 'eccyclema' which exposed to view the interior of the palace[2].

These various inventions and improvements were not of course the work of a moment, but were evolved by slow degrees in the course of a long career; and the process of development can be traced from the existing tragedies. Thus in the earlier plays the descriptions of the scene of action are vague and undefined: in the Orestean trilogy, on the other hand, the frequency of such descriptions points to an increase of elaboration in the scenery. Again, in the earlier dramas, there are few spectacular effects: the later ones—the Prometheus and Oresteia—are full of them. We may mention as examples the flying griffin of Oceanus, the winged car of the Ocean nymphs, the thunder and lightning on the Caucasus, the descent of Athene from heaven, and, lastly, the view of the Shrine at Delphi, with the hideous forms of the Furies stretched in a circle round the altar.

In addition to his other theatrical duties Aeschylus was also the trainer of his own choruses; and in the art of choral dancing he is said to have been pre-eminent, and to have shown unusual skill in the invention of new movements and figures[3]. Many of his odes are plainly composed with a view

σκηνὴν εὑρήματα προσνέμειν, ἐκκυκλήματα καὶ περιάκτους καὶ μηχανάς κ.τ.λ.

[1] Cramer, l. c. ἡ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἔστιν ἃ τούτων προσεμηχανήσατο καὶ προσεξεῦρεν. The 'periaktoi' were probably of later date than either Aeschylus or Sophocles: see Attic Theatre, p. 182.

[2] The 'theologeion' was introduced in the Psychostasia, to exhibit Zeus in heaven, weighing in his scales the souls of Memnon and Achilles. In the same play the body of Memnon was carried away from earth by means of the 'crane' (Pollux, 4. 130). The 'machine' is used in the Prometheus to float Oceanus through the air (Prom. 284–287, and Schol. ad loc.). In the Choephori the dead bodies of Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra are revealed by means of the 'eccyclema' (Choeph. 373, and Schol. ad loc.).

[3] Athen. p. 21 πολλὰ σχήματα ὀρχηστικὰ αὐτὸς ἐξευρίσκων ἀνεδίδου τοῖς χορευταῖς· Χαμαιλέων γοῦν πρῶτον

to effective presentation in the dance. Such, for example, are the lyrics in the Septem. The passionate outcries of the besieged maidens, the abject terror with which they hear the sound of the approaching forces, and the vividness with which they paint the horrors of a captured city, are wonderfully effective considered as mere poetry. But if we imagine these odes as they were performed in the orchestra, with all the accompaniments of appropriate music, and wild and despairing gesture, we may form some conception of the intensity of the impression which they would produce. No less effective must have been the scene in the Oresteia, where the Furies rush into the orchestra with savage shouts of exultation, following like sleuth-hounds upon the trail of Orestes. In these and similar performances we may well believe that the art of choral mimicry was brought to its highest perfection by Aeschylus.

§ 3. *Selection and Treatment of the Plots.*

The dramas of Aeschylus, with the exception of the Persae, are all mythological in subject, the favourite source from which they are taken being the Epic Cycle—a group of ancient poems which included the Iliad and the Odyssey, and dealt principally with the history of the Trojan war, and the fortunes of the house of Oedipus. From this collection of epics nearly half the plays of Aeschylus are derived, four being from the Iliad and three from the Odyssey. Next to the Cycle he shows the greatest preference for legends connected with Dionysus, or with the expedition of the Argonauts. But his tragedies are drawn from very various quarters, and cover nearly the whole ground of Greek mythology [1]. Some of them appear to have been based on mere oral tradition, and not on previous literature. Thus the subject of the Glaucus Pontius was an

αὐτόν φησι σχηματίσαι τοὺς χορούς, ὀρχηστοδιδασκάλοις οὐ χρησάμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν τοῖς χοροῖς τὰ σχήματα ποιοῦντα τῶν ὀρχήσεων . . . Ἀριστοφάνης γοῦν . . . ποιεῖ αὐτὸν Αἰσχύλον λέγοντα· Τοῖσι χοροῖς αὐτὸς τὰ σχήματ' ἐποίουν.

[1] See Appendix II, where a list is given of the extant titles of the Aeschylean plays, classified according to their subjects, and the sources from which they were taken.

obscure Boeotian myth, which Aeschylus himself discovered by personal inquiries among the local fishermen[1].

It is said that Aeschylus was accustomed to describe his tragedies as 'slices from the great banquet of Homer[2].' The significance of the phrase is not altogether clear. Some critics suppose that he was alluding to the tone in which his dramas were conceived, and meant to imply that their heroic grandeur was a reflection of Homer's spirit[3]. Others apply the expression to the structure of his earlier plays, to which the prevalence of narrative gave an epic tinge. But the wording of the phrase would seem to show that he was referring to the origin of his plots. If this was so, it is clear that in speaking of Homer he cannot have meant merely the poet of the Iliad and the Odyssey, from whom, as a matter of fact, only seven of his tragedies were derived. He must have been following the practice of the earlier Greeks, by whom the whole of the Epic Cycle was commonly attributed to Homer; and his description of his plays as 'slices from Homer,' would thus refer to the large proportion which were founded upon the Cycle[4].

Of 'plot' in the modern sense of the word there is little or nothing in Aeschylus. All those sudden obstacles, unexpected developments, and rapid vicissitudes of situation which give variety to the action in a modern drama, have no place in his tragedies; and it is a mistake to search in them for qualities which he never desired or attempted to introduce. His plays are unique examples of the 'simple' as opposed to the 'complex' method of construction. The ultimate issue of the story,

[1] Paus. 9. 22. 7.

[2] Athen. p. 347 *τὰς αὐτοῦ τραγῳδίας τεμάχη ὧν ἔλεγε τῶν Ὁμήρου μεγάλων δείπνων.*

[3] Cp. Aristoph. Ran. 1040 *ὅθεν* (from Homer) *ἡμεῖς φρὴν ἀνωμαξάμεθα πολλὰς ἀρετὰς ἀνείρων | Πατρόκλειον, Τεύκρου θυμολέοντος.*

[4] For this wider meaning of Homer cp. Proclus, Chrest. p. 233 *οἱ μέντοι γ' ἀρχαῖοι καὶ τὸν κύκλον ἀναφέρουσιν εἰς Ὅμηρον.* Homer, according to Pindar, was said to have given the Cypria to his daughter as a dowry (Aelian, Var. Hist. 9. 15). Callinus ascribed the Thebais to Homer (Paus. 9. 9. 5). From Herod. 2. 117 it appears that some people regarded Homer as the author of the Cypria and the Epigoni. The Little Iliad is assigned to Homer in Pseud-Demosth. Epitaph. § 29.

and the mode by which it will be brought about, are known to the audience from the very first. The action moves on in one unswerving and impressive course. Long choral odes unfold the profound significance of the events, expounding, warning, and instructing. Between the choral odes come the brief but impassioned dialogues, in which the characters work out their doom, and the inevitable justice of the gods advances slowly but surely to its appointed end.

But in spite of this straightforwardness, and lack of all intricacy and complication, few plays could be less justly charged with monotony. It is possible, in the drama, to maintain the interest, not only by the complexity of the incidents, but also by the variety of the tone and the gradations of the colouring. In this latter art Aeschylus is a consummate master. He arranges and combines his scenes in such an effective manner as never to weary the reader by the sombre uniformity of the picture. His skill in this respect may be illustrated by an examination into the structure of the Persae, which is one of the most conspicuous specimens of the 'simple' class of drama. It is almost devoid of action. The campaign has come to an end before the play commences, and all that is exhibited upon the stage is the reception at Susa of the news of the Persian defeat, the return of Xerxes, and the lamentation of the Persians. The idea of the tragedy was derived from the Phoenissae of Phrynichus[1]. But the mode of treatment adopted by Phrynichus differed widely from that of Aeschylus, and the difference is most instructive. Phrynichus opened his play with a description of the defeat of Xerxes, given by the eunuch while placing the chairs for the elders. After such a commencement the rest of the composition must have been monotonous and deficient in interest, and could consist of little else but lamentations and outbursts of grief, after the manner of the old choral drama.

The Persae, on the other hand, is a masterpiece of arrangement. The catastrophe, instead of being announced at the beginning, is approached step by step with infinite skill, and

[1] Argum. Aesch. Persae.

the gloom grows deeper as we advance. First there is the chorus of the Persian elders, anxious for news about the army, and suggesting, by their doubts and misgivings, a vague presentiment of impending calamity. Then Atossa appears upon the scene, with the story of her ominous dream, and heightens the feeling of foreboding and apprehension. Then at length, when the expectancy of the audience has been raised to the highest pitch, the messenger appears, and the truth is known. In successive speeches he describes the losses of the Persians, the defeat of Salamis, the massacre of Psyttaleia, and the disastrous retreat. The tidings come, stroke upon stroke, with accumulating horror. But all is not yet revealed. The ghost of Darius now rises from the tomb, and after solemnly rebuking his countrymen for their pride and insolence, foretells the crushing defeat which awaits them at Plataea. At last, when everything has been brought to light, and the worst fears are realised, Xerxes and his attendants appear upon the scene, dusty and way-worn, with tattered garments and dishevelled locks, showing the precipitancy of their flight. They join with the elders in an outburst of lamentation, and the play closes with this final and crowning picture of disaster.

The above analysis shows with how much artifice the monotony of the subject was diversified, partly by the gradual and impressive advance towards the climax, partly by the variety in the method of exposition, and the rapid transitions from anxious foreboding to picturesque narrative, and from solemn exhortation to despairing grief. The same structural skill is to be found in most, if not all, of the extant plays of Aeschylus, and there is an appearance of conscious art in the arrangement of the scenes which leads one to doubt whether Sophocles was correct in his well-known criticism, when he said that Aeschylus was guided solely by instinct, and 'did what was right without knowing it[1].'

In knowledge of stage-effect, too, Aeschylus is no less pre-

[1] Athen. p. 428 *διὸ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς αὐτῷ μεμφόμενος ἔλεγεν ὅτι, Ὦ Αἰσχύλε, εἰ καὶ τὰ δέοντα ποιεῖς, ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδας γε ποιεῖς, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Χαμαιλέων ἐν τῷ περὶ Αἰσχύλου.*

eminent than in poetic genius, and doubtless profited, like Shakespeare and Molière, by his experience as an actor. His plays are full of scenes which must have produced a profound impression in the theatre, such as, for instance, the gradual awakening of the Furies by the ghost of Clytaemnestra; the procession of the Furies to their home under the Areopagus, escorted with torches and acclamations by the people of Athens; or, above all, the scene in the Agamemnon, in which, after a long period of ominous foreboding, there comes a breathless pause, and then suddenly from the interior of the palace is heard the death-shriek of Agamemnon. Probably the world has seldom seen a more splendid combination of the various arts of poetry, music, dancing, and stage-management than was produced under the guidance of his genius.

But although, in all the higher qualities of dramatic composition, his power and skill are indisputable, at the same time he often displays a sort of archaic simplicity in his choice of incidents and his disregard of probabilities. He retains even the grotesque features of the old legends, such as the slaughter of Odysseus with a roach's spike, after his death has been foretold by the dropping of heron's dung[1]. He is careless about the plausibility of his story, and causes Electra to recognise her brother by the fact, among other things, that his footprints are of equal size with her own[2]. The Philoctetes, in the same way, is said by Dion to have abounded in impossibilities. Although Philoctetes had been cast away for ten years upon the island of Lemnos, not one of the inhabitants had ever visited him; yet at the commencement of the play the chorus of Lemnians advance to address him, without any apology for, or reference to, their previous neglect. More strange still must have been the failure of Philoctetes to recognise Odysseus when he landed upon the island; yet no explanation was given. In both these points the simplicity and indifference of Aeschylus are contrasted by Dion with the more elaborate artifice of his successors, Sophocles and Euripides[3]. Again, in the Persae

[1] Frag. 275 (Nauck). [2] Choeph. 205–211.
[3] Dion Chrysost. or. 52.

the first news of the long series of disasters is brought to Susa only an hour or so before the arrival of Xerxes himself. The Agamemnon opens with the tidings that Troy has been captured during the night; yet in the course of the very same day the king reaches Argos with the remnant of his army. In these and similar matters Aeschylus and the older tragic poets appear to have allowed themselves much greater liberty than was tolerated in later times[1].

The boldness and audacity which he displays in the invention of situations is equally characteristic of the youthful drama. No conception is too daring for him, however closely it borders on the grotesque. Prometheus is chained to the rock in the presence of the audience; his hands and feet are riveted with iron, and a wedge driven through his breast; and in this posture he remains throughout the play. Niobe, in one of the lost tragedies, lay stretched in prostrate grief over the tomb of her children during two whole scenes, without uttering a word[2]. Such pictures of mute despair were a favourite device with Aeschylus, and are much ridiculed in the Frogs[3]. Nevertheless the extant dramas show that on occasions he could draw from the silence of his characters an effect more magical than words. Thus when Prometheus is being bound to the

[1] The action of a Greek tragedy was always, in theory, confined to a single day. The rule had its origin in the continuous presence of the chorus in the orchestra, which rendered the supposition of a longer lapse of time impossible. But the strict observance of the rule was of comparatively late growth. The 'day' of the early tragic poets was a flexible period of time, which might be extended at will. Hence Aristotle describes the older tragedies as ἀόριστοι τῷ χρόνῳ (Poet. c. 5).

Dr. Verrall's new theory concerning the plot of the Agamemnon is well known (see the Introduction to his edition). He thinks it impossible that one day should have embraced the events of several weeks. Hence he supposes that in reality Troy was captured some time before the play begins; that Clytaemnestra's story about the beacon fires was a falsehood; and that the beacon seen from Argos was lighted by her adherents, to warn her of the near approach of the king, and enable her to prepare for his murder. But it is difficult to believe that, if this was the story which Aeschylus wished to tell, he should have told it in such an obscure and indirect manner. To assume that he included in one day the events of some weeks seems a less violent supposition, and one more in accordance with the general character of his dramas.

[2] Vita Aesch. p. 3 Dindf.

[3] Aristoph. Ran. 911–920.

cliff, the taunts of the savage giant fail to extract from his lips a single word of reply; and it is only when he is left alone in the desert that he gives free outlet to his sorrow. In this case the scornful silence, followed by the pathetic outburst, are impressive beyond description.

Lastly, like most early poets, Aeschylus exhibits, in the selection and treatment of his subjects, a preference for everything which is strange, and mysterious, and remote. He loves to penetrate into the dim twilight of the primitive mythology, with its Titan gods and goddesses, its Furies, Gorgons, and other weird and monstrous figures[1]. He lays the scenes of his tragedies in Heaven and even in Hell[2]. He is fond of discoursing about those far distant regions which lie on the borderland between fable and reality. Hence the long list of strange names and places in the Persae; and the moving narrative of the wanderings of Io among Scythians and Amazons and savage Chalybes, through the lands of the 'sharp-fanged gryphons and one-eyed Arimaspi.' But above all he excels in the delineation of those dark and mysterious presentiments of evil which sometimes invade the mind. He leads up slowly to the catastrophe, amid a gloomy and ever-thickening atmosphere of doubt and foreboding, and shows how the shadows gradually close in upon the victims as they advance towards their fate. In this gradual intensification of the feeling of ominous misgiving before the approach of some calamity, of which the first half of the Agamemnon is a magnificent example, Aeschylus has no rival.

§ 4. *The Characters.*

The sacred legends which formed the subject of Greek tragedy were regarded by Aeschylus with religious veneration. According to his opinion it was the duty of the dramatist to represent them in a worthy and impressive manner, so as to elevate the minds of the audience by a majestic picture of the

[1] In his three Προμηθεῖς, his Εὐμενίδες, and Φορκίδες.

[2] e. g. in the Ψυχοστασία and the Σίσυφος.

heroic world. Such being his conception of the nature of tragedy, the aim which he proposed to himself in the delineation of character was not, like Shakespeare, to 'hold the mirror up to nature,' but to people his stage with creations of ideal strength and grandeur; and the force of his genius is nowhere more apparent than in the success with which he has accomplished this congenial task. The gods and heroes who figure in his tragedies are true scions of the heroic age. Superhuman strength and courage, indomitable will, and iron endurance are their predominant qualities. They have none of the frailties and weaknesses of human beings. No force can bend them: no tender motives can allure them from their course. Prometheus suffers torture for thirty thousand years, rather than submit to the will of Zeus; he rejects with scorn all offers of mediation, confronting the ministers of vengeance with proud defiance or contemptuous silence. Clytaemnestra, the paramour of Aegisthus and the murderess of Agamemnon, is another of these colossal figures. The passions and infirmities of an adulteress are replaced, in her case, by relentless hate and cold and calculating energy. She feels no touch of remorse for her crimes, and she meets her doom without fear. When she hears of the murder of her lover, her first impulse is to seize an axe, and to rush to confront her foes; but finding that all is over, she wastes no words in piteous lamentations; after a few questions and replies—short, stern, and decisive—between herself and Orestes, she submits without a murmur to the inevitable [1]. Her character, though superhuman in strength, is drawn with such power and consistency, that it ceases to strike one as improbable, and she seems to be the natural inhabitant of that distant world of legend which Aeschylus set himself to describe.

The principal characters in the tragedy of Aeschylus are all of this heroic mould. But if his plays had been sustained throughout at the same high level of preternatural grandeur, the strain would have been too great for the endurance of any audience. Aeschylus, whose careful avoidance of monotony of impression has already been noticed, relieves and diversifies the

[1] Choeph. 887–930.

sombre majesty of the general tone by the introduction of subordinate personages of a more homely type. This is especially the case in his treatment of the chorus, from which, as being usually composed of ordinary human beings and not of heroes, less dignity of bearing was to be expected. Thus the helpless weakness of the maidens in the Septem, and the tender sympathy and feminine devotion of the nymphs in the Prometheus, are painted with perfect fidelity to nature, and skilfully contrasted with the unbending severity of Prometheus and Eteocles. Even on the stage the lesser characters are often conceived in a similar vein. The cowardly and blustering Aegisthus supplies a striking foil to the manly fortitude of Clytaemnestra. Oceanus, in the Prometheus, with his plausible offers of assistance, and his hearty acquiescence in the refusal of Prometheus to accept them, introduces a tinge of comedy into the prevailing sternness of the drama. The homely sententiousness of the watchman in the Agamemnon, and the rambling soliloquy of the nurse in the Choephori, with her long enumeration of the troubles and disappointments incidental to nursing, fulfil the same general purpose, and lighten the oppressiveness of the picture.

Female characters, with the exception of Clytaemnestra, play an unimportant part in the tragedies of Aeschylus. The softer and more tender passions are touched but slightly. In dramas which, like his, were intended to serve as examples of stern heroic virtue, or as revelations of religious truth, it was impossible that love and tenderness should supply the leading motive. Euripides, in the Frogs, taunts him with the deficiency, and remarks that he had 'little of the goddess of love in his composition[1].' But his reticence concerning these subjects was the result of deliberate purpose, rather than of any want of sympathy. That he was able, when he wished, to depict the more romantic side of human nature is proved by many tender touches scattered up and down his plays. Nothing, for example, could be more pathetic than the description of Menelaus, wandering disconsolate through the house

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1045 μὰ Δί' οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης οὐδέν σοι.

which Helen had abandoned, and hating the very sight of the 'eyeless statues' which recalled her image to his mind[1]. Equally beautiful is the story told by Io of the first vague intimations of her destiny as the bride of Zeus, and of the 'nightly visions which evermore hovered round her virgin bower, seeking to woo her with glozing words.' This latter passage, with its dreamy charm and delicacy of language, could never have been written by a poet who was insensible to the softer emotions of mankind[2].

But the point in which he most excels is the delineation of the weird and supernatural. He possesses in the highest degree the rare gift of investing monstrous forms with life and substantiality. His Furies, spectres, and apparitions, like the fiends of Dante and the ghosts and witches of Shakespeare, are made to express themselves in tones of such reality and verisimilitude, that the illusion is complete, and we feel that if such beings existed they could hardly speak otherwise. No less marvellous is the power with which he paints the ravings of madness and the ecstacies of inspiration. The agonised frenzy of Cassandra, as she reveals in broken utterances the story of the house of Pelops, is one of the greatest triumphs of dramatic literature. The contrast between her delirious utterances and the subdued and awe-struck replies of the chorus, produces an effect which is only to be paralleled by the similar scene in Macbeth, where the agony of Lady Macbeth's remorse is likewise thrown into startling relief by the grave and sober comments of the doctor and the gentlewoman.

[1] Agam. 414–426 πόθῳ δ' ὑπερποντίας | φάσμα δόξει δόμων ἀνάσσειν. | εὐμόρφων δὲ κολοσσῶν | ἔχθεται χάρις ἀνδρί· | ὀμμάτων δ' ἐν ἀχηνίαις ἔρρει πᾶσ' Ἀφροδίτα. | ὀνειρόφαντοι δὲ πενθήμονες | πάρειοι δόξαι φέρουσαι χάριν ματαίαν. | μάταν γὰρ εὖτ' ἂν ἐσθλά τις δοκῶν ὁρᾷ, | παραλλάξασα διὰ χερῶν | βέβακεν ὄψις οὐ μεθύστερον | πτεροῖς ὀπαδοῦσ' ὕπνου κελεύθοις.

[2] Prom. 645–657 ἀεὶ γὰρ ὄψεις ἔννυχοι πωλεύμεναι | ἐς παρθενῶνας τοὺς ἐμοὺς παρηγόρουν | λείοισι μύθοις, "ὦ μέγ' εὔδαιμον κόρη, | τί παρθενεύει δαρόν, ἐξὸν σοι γάμου | τυχεῖν μεγίστου; Ζεὺς γὰρ ἱμέρου βέλει | πρὸς σοῦ τέθαλπται καὶ συναίρεσθαι Κύπριν | θέλει· σὺ δ', ὦ παῖ, μαπολακτίσῃς λέχος | τὸ Ζηνός, ἀλλ' ἔξελθε πρὸς Λέρνης βαθὺν | λειμῶνα, ποίμνας βουστάσεις τε πρὸς πατρός, | ὡς ἂν τὸ Διὸν ὄμμα λωφήσῃ πόθου." | τοιοῖσδε πάσας εὐφρόνας ὀνείρασι | συνειχόμην δύστηνος, ἔς τε δὴ πατρὶ | ἔτλην γεγωνεῖν νυκτίφαντ' ὀνείρατα.

§ 5. *The Language.*

Aeschylus was the inventor of the grand style of tragic diction. He was the first, not only to exalt and ennoble the spirit of tragedy, but also to clothe it in a form of suitable magnificence, and to 'build up the structure of splendid phrases[1].' His language, which we are now to consider, serves as a fitting vehicle for the expression of his mighty conceptions. It is cast in the same majestic mould as his heroes and heroines. In splendour and impressiveness it towers above the level of common speech just as much as his Prometheus and his Clytaemnestra surpass in greatness ordinary human nature.

Among the means by which this effect is produced one of the most obvious is the pomp and volume and resonance of the phraseology. His verse is a massive structure, built together with materials of imposing size and strength. Words as 'huge as Parnes or Lycabettus' impart a sonorous gravity to the diction[2]. When the resources of the existing language are insufficient for his purpose, he uses the licence of genius to create a new poetical vocabulary of his own[3]. Out of the surviving plays and fragments nearly a thousand words have been collected which appear to be the invention of Aeschylus[4]. Long compound adjectives, and nouns and verbs of impressive bulk, are coined with a freedom which could only have been possible in a language of great flexibility, and at an early stage of its literary development[5]. Weighted with mate-

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1004 ἀλλ' ὦ πρῶτος τῶν Ἑλλήνων πυργώσας ῥήματα σεμνά.

[2] Ib. 1057 ἢν οὖν σὺ λέγῃς Λυκαβηττοὺς | καὶ Παρνήθων ἡμῖν μεγέθη, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ χρηστὰ διδάσκειν;

[3] Dion. Hal. Vett. Script. Cens. c. 10 πολλαχοῦ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς δημιουργὸς καὶ ποιητὴς ἰδίων ὀνομάτων.

[4] See Todt, de Aeschylo vocabulorum inventore, Halle, 1855. Todt's list includes all the words used by Aeschylus, but not found in any writer before his time. Many of them, no doubt, may have occurred in the lost works of earlier poets; but the majority seem to have been the coinage of Aeschylus. These Aeschylean words were used largely by Euripides, more sparingly by Sophocles. The Alexandrians, such as Lycophron, Callimachus, and Apollonius, are large borrowers from this source. Aeschylean words are rare in the orators, but frequent in later writers such as Plutarch and Lucian.

[5] e.g. γυναικόβουλος, χιλιονιόνης,

rials such as these his diction approaches, in majestic grandeur of expression, the utmost limits of which human speech is capable. In the words of Dionysius, it resembles one of those vast piles of Cyclopean masonry, built of huge and unhewn blocks, before which the smooth and polished workmanship of later buildings sinks into insignificance[1].

This pomp of language is enlivened throughout by a wealth and brilliance of imagination which has only been equalled, among dramatists, by Shakespeare. Metaphors, similes, figures, and images come streaming from his mind in endless profusion, and without the least appearance of effort. Figurative diction, in his case, is not an acquired habit, but an instinctive mode of expression. His thoughts naturally tend to clothe themselves in concrete form, by means of some flashing image or vivid picture, which stamps them upon the mind. Hence the extraordinary vigour and incisiveness of his style. To take a few examples. The wrath of God is said to 'trample with heavy foot upon the nations of Persia[2].' When the people of Argos vote, the 'sky bristles with right hands,' and their decision, once taken, is immovable and 'pegged down with bolts[3].' The ships of the Greeks, on their voyage from Troy, are 'butted at in fury' by storm and tempest, and 'whirled to and fro by an evil shepherd,' so that on the morrow the sea is 'in flower with corpses[4].' Again, as an instance of the profusion with which he piles metaphor on metaphor and simile on simile, we may cite the passage in which Cassandra prefaces her revelation. 'The oracle,' she says, 'shall no longer peer forth from behind a veil, like a newly-wedded bride, but blow

φρενοπληγής, αἱματοσταγής, σιδηρόφρων, τοξόδαμνος, κροκόβαπτος, οἰστρήλατος—πόρθμευμα, κατασκήνωμα, χάλκευμα, σωφρόνισμα—αἰσχυντήρ, θοινατήρ, ἀσπίστωρ—κρότησμός, ἀπολακτισμός, σταλαγμός—χειραναξία, κοινοβωμία, κενανδρία—περισκηνόω, ἁρπαλίζω, οὐρανίζω, σεμνοκομπέω, δωματοφθορέω, κ.τ.λ.

[1] Dion. Hal. Comp. Verb. c. 22.

[2] Pers. 515 *ὦ δυσπό·ητε δαῖμον, ὡς ἄγαν βαρὺς | ποδοῖν ἐνήλλου παντὶ Περσικῷ γένει.*

[3] Suppl. 607 *χερσὶ δεξιοπτύμοις | ἔφριξεν αἰθήρ.* Ibid. 943 *ψῆφος κέκρανται, μήποτ' ἐκδοῦναι βίᾳ | στόλον γυναικῶν· τῶνδ' ἐφήλωται τορῶς | γόμφος διαμπάξ, ὡς μένειν ἀραρότως.*

[4] Agam. 655–659 *αἱ δὲ κεροτυποῦμεναι βίᾳ | χειμῶνι . . . ᾤχοντ' ἄφαντοι ποιμένος κακοῦ στρόβῳ | . . . ὁρῶμεν ἀνθοῦν πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον νεκροῖς.*

fresh and clear towards the sunrise, so as to send surging into the daylight, like a wave of the sea, woes far greater than hers,' while she 'scents with keen nostril the trail of ancient evil[1].'

Aeschylus also resembles Shakespeare in the boldness with which he often combines two incongruous metaphors, as when the Argive elders declare that they have 'no hope to wind off anything profitable from the burning flames of their mind,' or when the chorus bid Electra 'drill this tale through her ear with the mind's silent tread[2].' Sometimes, indeed, the metaphorical bias of the poet's intellect leads him into grotesqueness, as in his famous description of dust as the 'brother of mud[3].' But instances of this kind are rare, and Aeschylus possesses the prerogative of true genius in his power of venturing with safety and success on the most daring flights of imagination.

One form of metaphorical speech which is exceedingly common in Aeschylus, and which contributes as much as anything to the vigour of his style, is his habit of personifying inanimate objects, and of investing them with life and feeling. Everything in his poetry seems to move, and breathe, and rejoice in its existence. Swords are 'savage-hearted' and 'swift of foot,' the waves of the sea quiver with 'endless laughter,' the ship's prow 'fixes its eyes on the waters in front, paying good heed to the voice of the rudder[4].' Perhaps the finest example of this manner is the description of the beacon-fire which brings the news of Troy's capture to Argos. The flame is conceived as some mighty spirit, exulting in its strength and swiftness. It 'vaults over the back of the sea with joy'; it 'hands its message' to the heights of Macistus;

[1] Agam. 1177–1185 *καὶ μὴν ὁ χρησμὸς οὐκέτ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων | ἔσται δεδορκὼς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκην· | λαμπρὸς δ' ἔοικεν ἡλίου πρὸς ἀντολὰς | πνέων ἐσᾴξειν, ὥστε κύματος δίκην | κλύζειν πρὸς αὐγὰς τοῦδε πήματος πολὺ | μεῖζον· φρενώσω δ' οὐκέτ' ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων. | καὶ μαρτυρεῖτε συνδρόμως ἴχνος κακῶν | ῥινηλατούσῃ τῶν πάλαι πεπραγμένων.*

[2] Ibid. 1031 *οὐδὲν ἐπελπομένα ποτὲ καίριον ἐκτολυπεύσειν | ζωπυρουμένας φρενός.* Choeph. 451 *δι' ὤτων δὲ συντέτραινε μῦθον ἡσύχῳ φρενῶν βάσει.*

[3] Agam. 495 *κάσις πηλοῦ κόνις.* Cp. also Sept. 351 *ἁρπαγαὶ δὲ διαδρομᾶν ὁμαίμονες.*

[4] Sept. 730 *ἀμόφρων σίδαρος.* Choeph. 576 *ποδῶκες χάλκευμα.* Prom. 89 *ποντίων τε κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα.* Suppl. 716–718 *καὶ πρῷρα πρόσθεν ὄμμασι βλέπουσ' ὁδόν, | οἴακος ἰθυντῆρος ὑστάτου νεὼς | ἄγαν καλῶς κλύουσα.*

it 'leaps across' the plain of Asopus, and 'urges on' the watchmen; its 'mighty beard of fire' streams across the Saronic gulf, as it rushes along from peak to peak, until finally it 'swoops down' upon the palace of the Atreidae[1].

Closely allied to this love of metaphor and personification is the use, very frequent in the plays of Aeschylus, of picturesque compound adjectives—such as 'beam-compacted,' 'golden-helmed,' 'travel-trodden,' 'hand-outstretching'—which appeal to the eye and the senses, and call up a vivid image of the thing described[2]. Each of these epithets is a little word-painting in itself, and their continual recurrence imparts to his language the glow and reality of a series of pictures. The practice was borrowed from Homer and the epic poets, but is employed by Aeschylus with much greater variety and power of imagination.

Another result of his exuberant fancy and lively perceptiveness is to be seen in the copious fullness of his diction, especially in descriptive passages. He delights to linger over the objects which he is mentioning, and to dwell fondly on their various qualities, adding touch after touch to the picture, as fresh ideas come streaming into his mind. Often, in this way, he accumulates adjectives one upon another in almost unlimited sequence. He speaks of a mountain precipice as 'bare, goat-abandoned, invisible, solitary, overhanging, vulture-haunted'; and of a curse as 'fearful, inveterate, guarding the house, crafty, relentless, vengeful[3].' To the same tendency are to be ascribed his frequent repetitions, such as 'listen and give ear,' 'summoned and not uncalled'; and his constant use of explanatory phrases, as in 'shields, the orbed protectors of the body,' and 'flowers, the children of all-productive earth[4].'

[1] Agam. 281–311.

[2] Suppl. 743 δορυπαγεῖς κυανώπιδες νῆες. Sept. 106 χρυσοπήληξ Ἄρης. Eum. 76 πλανοστιβὴς χθών. Sept. 173 χειρότονοι λιταί. Cp. also Choeph. 32 δρθόθριξ φόβος. Prom. 574 κηρόπλαστος δόναξ. Eum. 192 αἱματορρόφος λέων. Pers. 159 χρυσεόστολμοι δόμοι.

[3] Suppl. 794 λισσὰς αἰγίλιψ ἀπρόσβεικτος οἰόφρων κρεμὰς | γυπιὰς πέτρα. Agam. 154 μίμνει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος | οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων μῆνις τεκνοποινος.

[4] Choeph. 5 κλύειν ἀκούσαι. Ibid.

But though his phraseology is gorgeous and ornate, the structure and syntax of the language is simple and archaic in character. He belongs to that earlier class of writers to whom rhetorical artifice was unknown. His sentences are arranged in straightforward fashion, more by way of parallel clauses than by the subordination of one clause to another. Rounded periods, with carefully balanced rhythm, polished antithesis, and recurring cadence, are foreign to his style. When he constructs a long sentence, he follows the natural order of the thought, without artifice or studied effect. He is the best representative, according to Dionysius, of that 'austere style,' as it was called by the ancients, which obeyed the promptings of nature rather than the rules of art, and which aimed above all things at dignity, freedom, and simplicity[1].

Yet in spite of these qualities his language is no doubt open to the charge of obscurity. This defect was felt even by the ancients, and is often alluded to in Aristophanes[2]. Much of his obscurity is due to a certain fanciful and enigmatical mode of expression which he not uncommonly adopts, as, for instance, when he speaks of a victory portended by favourable auspices on the road as an 'auspicious wayside victory[3].' But the principal source of the difficulty in his style arises from the splendour and impetuosity of his genius, which hurries him along swiftly from thought to thought, and from image to image, without regard for necessary links and transitions. One brilliant conception succeeds another with such startling rapidity, that the mind is bewildered, and fails to follow the chain of ideas. Language of such a type could not fail to be perplexing, even if applied to the most simple purposes; but when employed by Aeschylus in the discussion of profound problems concerning Fate and Providence,

838 ἥκω μὲν οὐκ ἄκλητος ἀλλ' ὑπάγγελος. Sept. 540 σάκει, κυκλωτῷ σώματος προβλήματι. Pers. 618 ἄνθη τε πλεκτά, παμφόρου γαίας τέκνα. Cp. Agam. 944 ὑπαί τις ἀρβύλας | λύοι τάχος, πρόδουλον ἔμβασιν ποδός.

[1] Dion. Hal. Comp. Verb. c. 22. Admir. Vi Dicendi in Dem. cc. 38, 39.

[2] Aristoph. Ran. 926 ἄγνωτα τοῖς θεωμένοις, 930 ἃ συμβαλεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδι' ἦν, 1122 ἀσαφὴς γὰρ ἦν ἐν τῇ φράσει τῶν πραγμάτων.

[3] Agam. 104 ὄδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν.

which are abstruse and difficult in themselves, it becomes doubly ambiguous.

Perhaps, however, the common opinion of his obscurity has been unduly exaggerated in modern times owing to the corrupt state of his text. The choral odes have all suffered in this respect. But if we take the best preserved of his plays—the Septem, Persae, and Prometheus—and confine our attention to the dialogue, we shall find that with few exceptions it is clear and free from difficulty. The enumeration of the services rendered by Prometheus to mankind, the account of the champions in the Septem, and the narrative of the battle of Salamis in the Persae, are models of lucid yet magnificent description. It must be confessed, indeed, that in his last work—the Orestean trilogy—he shows a decided preference for complexity and indirectness of expression, which cannot be accounted for by any supposed mutilations of the manuscript. But this tendency appears to be not uncommon in poets of advancing years, and may be paralleled by numerous examples from the later plays of Shakespeare and of Goethe.

The influence of Homer upon the formation of his style has often been pointed out and is easily discernible[1]. Many of those picturesque epithets, which have already been mentioned as characteristic of his poetry, are taken directly from Homer[2]; and many archaic nouns and verbs are borrowed from the same source[3]. But besides enriching his vocabulary from Homer, he adopts a large number of his phrases and expressions[4]. He also imitates his similes and metaphors, comparing, for example, an army to a swarm of bees, joy of mind to dew upon a cornfield, and the contrivance of a murder to the stitching of a garment[5]. Instances of this kind, which are very numerous,

[1] See Lechner, de Aeschyli studio Homerico.

[2] E.g. ἠλίβατος, γαμψῶνυξ, βροτολοιγός, ἑτεραλκής, ἱππιοχάρμης κ.τ.λ.

[3] Ἀμολγός, οἰωνοπόλος, ἀΰτή, αἰνόμορος, οὐτιδανός, δολόμητις κ.τ.λ.

[4] Thus Sept. 607 θεοῦ μάστιγι παγκοίνῳ Ἀάμη (cp. Il. 12. 37 Διὸς μάστιγι δαμέντες). Agam. 120 βλαβέντα λοισθίων δρόμων (cp. Od. 1. 195 βλάπτουσι κελεύθου). Suppl. 800 κυσὶν δ' ἔπειθ' ἕλωρα κἀπιχωρίοις | πετῆσι δεῖπνον οὐκ ἀναίνομαι πέλειν (cp. Il. 1. 4 αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν | οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι.

[5] Pers. 129, Il. 2. 87. Agam. 1391, Il. 23. 597. Agam. 1604, Od. 16. 379.

show how deeply his mind was penetrated with the language of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and are a proof of the reverence with which he regarded the ancient epic poets, from whom, as he confesses in the Frogs, he derived his first conception of heroic valour, and of noble characters such as 'Patroclus and lion-hearted Teucer[1].'

§ 6. *Religious and Moral Ideas.*

The great problems of religion and morals, and of man's destiny and the government of the universe, enter so largely into the composition of the tragedies of Aeschylus, that in order to appreciate their full significance it is necessary to acquire some general notion of his views on these questions and of the ideas which he desired to inculcate[2]. In the case of a modern dramatist the attempt to extract such information from his works might be hazardous and misleading, owing to the difficulty of discriminating between the real sentiments of the poet himself, and the opinions which were merely placed, for dramatic purposes, in the mouths of his characters. But in Aeschylus there is no such difficulty to be encountered. His choral odes, like those of most of the ancient tragic poets, are composed with the express purpose of enforcing his own ideas, and pointing the moral of the tragedy. Moreover, in many places the sentiments of the dialogue are obviously those of the poet; and the very substance of the plots is often of such a character as to place his opinions in the clearest light.

The sixth century, in which Aeschylus passed his early years, was one of great stir and movement in matters of religion and speculation. The old theogonies of Homer and Hesiod, with their primitive morality and simple conception of the gods, had long since failed to satisfy the higher minds among the nation. The prevalence of deeper aspirations and a more searching curiosity is proved by many symptoms. Associations such as the Orphic societies and the Pythagorean

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1040.

[2] On this subject see the excellent treatise by De Faye (Étude sur les Idées Religieuses et Morales d'Aeschyle, Paris, 1884).

brotherhoods, with their ascetic rules of life and their doctrines of immortality, began about this time to acquire their widespread popularity. The mysticism of Pherecydes, the pantheistic dreams of Xenophanes, and the cosmic speculations of Thales and Anaximander, are equally typical of the new spirit of the age. All these various tendencies, philosophical and religious, must have had their influence in forming the opinions of Aeschylus; and Cicero goes so far as to call him a Pythagorean[1]. But the exact extent of the debt which he owed to his predecessors cannot any longer be determined, owing to our fragmentary knowledge of the doctrines of the sixth century. We must content ourselves, therefore, with the mere exposition of his views, as they appear in his tragedies, without endeavouring to discriminate between what was due to his own genius and what was derived from other sources.

The work which Aeschylus set himself to perform, as a moral teacher, was to reconcile the popular religion with the more advanced conceptions of his time, by purifying its grossness and harmonising its various inconsistencies. In this attempt he was more successful than might have been expected. The primitive legends, remodelled and reilluminated by his genius, acquire, as we have seen, an unwonted grandeur and impressiveness. But the task was one of insuperable difficulty. The old Greek mythology, with its medley of beauties and monstrosities, and of graceful fancies and coarse brutalities, hardly admitted of being systematised into a perfect whole. It was impossible, therefore, that Aeschylus, in endeavouring to accomplish this result, should avoid occasional incongruities, or that the scheme expounded in his writings should be complete and symmetrical in all its parts. Few, however, will deny that in his hands the religion of the Greeks has been raised to a higher level of moral dignity than it ever attained either before or since.

The first point to be noticed, in regard to his religious views, is the sublime conception of Zeus as the supreme ruler of the

[1] Cic. Tusc. 2. 10. 23 veniat Aeschylus non poeta solum sed etiam Pythagoreus; sic enim accepimus.

universe. The other deities are represented as merely the ministers of his will, and though still possessing their usual characteristics, stand in a subordinate rank. The language applied to Zeus is monotheistic in tone, and his praises are chanted in strains of the loftiest exaltation. He is 'king of kings, most blessed of the blessed, most mighty of rulers[1].' His power 'knows no superior, nor is any one enthroned above him; swifter than speech is the accomplishment of his purpose[2].' He 'holds for ever the balance of the scales: nothing comes to mortal man but by the will of Zeus[3].' 'Zeus is sky, and earth, and heaven; Zeus is all things, yea, greater than all things[4].' His power, though invisible, is omnipotent and omnipresent. 'Dark and shadowy,' it is said, 'are the pathways of his counsels, and difficult to see. From their high-towering hopes he hurleth down to destruction the race of men. Yet setteth he no forces in array, all his works are effortless. Seated on holiest throne, from thence, unknown to us, he bringeth his will to pass[5].'

This noble conception of Zeus, it cannot be denied, is scarcely consistent with the character which he bears in Greek mythology, or with the actions which he sometimes performs even in Aeschylus himself. Hence some critics have been led to imagine that there is in Aeschylus a double Zeus—the ordinary god of the polytheistic religion, and the one omnipotent deity in whom he really believed. They suppose that he had no genuine faith in the credibility of the popular legends, but merely used them as a setting for his tragedies; and that his own convictions were of a more philosophical type, and are seen occasionally in such passages as those above quoted[6].

This theory, however, though not without a certain plausi-

[1] Suppl. 524–526.

[2] Ibid. 595–599.

[3] Ibid. 822–824.

[4] Frag. 70 *Ζεύς ἐστιν αἰθήρ, Ζεὺς δὲ γῆ, Ζεὺς δ' οὐρανός, | Ζεύς τοι τὰ πάντα, χώτι τῶνδ' ὑπέρτερον.* The authenticity of these remarkable lines, which had previously been doubted, has been proved in recent times by the discovery at Herculaneum of Philodemus' work *περὶ εὐσεβείας*, in which they are quoted as from the Heliades of Aeschylus. See Nauck's Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 24.

[5] Suppl. 85–95.

[6] This view is maintained by Hermann, Op. 8. 144 foll., and controverted by Schoemann, Op. 3 (Vindiciae Iovis Aeschylei).

bility, is open to serious objections. In the first place it seems to be most improbable that there was any clear distinction in the mind of Aeschylus between the Zeus of the legends, and the higher Zeus of his own imagination. In his descriptions of the deity the loftiest conceptions are closely intermingled with fabulous traditions. Though Zeus is invoked as 'king of kings, and mightiest of rulers,' he appears in the very next lines as 'lover of Io and ancestor of Danaus[1].' While addressed in glowing language as the lord of the universe, he is entitled at the same time successor of Uranus and Cronus[2]. Inconsistencies of this kind were the natural result of the endeavour to reconcile legend with philosophy.

Further than this, the general impression produced by the plays of Aeschylus is unfavourable to the supposition that he was simply using the old legends for poetical purposes. The earnestness with which he inculcates reverence towards the gods of tradition, and the anxiety which he shows to remove all stumbling-blocks from the old mythology, seem inconsistent with the indifference of a sceptic[3]. Not that we are bound to assume, on this account, that he accepted with unhesitating faith the whole circle of the legends. Much, no doubt, he regarded as uncertain, much as false. Even the name 'Zeus' was to him a mere convention[4]. Like Pindar, he felt himself at liberty to reject what was hateful and improbable. But the ancient mythical gods were more to him than mere types and abstractions; and though their names might be uncertain, and their deeds distorted by tradition, he seems to have felt no doubt in his heart that they were real and potent divinities.

[1] Suppl. 524–537.

[2] Agam. 160–178.

[3] Thus the destruction of the Persian army is represented as the result of their sacrilegious acts (Pers. 809–814). The Greeks will have a safe return from Troy, if they reverence the gods and temples of the captured city (Agam. 338–340). In Eum. 640–646 there is an attempt to soften down the inconsistency between the justice of Zeus and his treatment of his father Cronus. In Eum. 1–8 it is explained that the accession of Apollo to the prophetic throne at Delphi was not the result of violence, but of peaceful agreement with the old gods.

[4] Agam. 160–163 Ζεύς, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὐτῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ, | τοῦτό νιν προσαυνέπω. Hence such terms as θεός and τὸ θεῖον are often substituted.

Zeus, then, in the conception of Aeschylus, is the ruler of all created things. But he is not a capricious monarch, swayed by casual passions, like the Zeus of Homer. To act with injustice is impossible to him; he is 'constrained' never to assist transgressors[1]. There is a universal law of justice, a moral ordinance governing the whole world, to which even he must submit. This law is called by different names—Fate, Destiny, Justice, Necessity[2]; but under these various terms the same all-embracing rule is denoted, as many passages will prove. Thus Fate is said to 'whet the blade of Justice'; Destiny 'forges for Justice her sword'; the Fates 'guide the helm of Necessity[3].' The special instruments by which, in the case of the more heinous offences, this law of strict justice is enforced are the Furies, the daughters of Night[4]. These dread goddesses of the underworld, in whom the spirit of vengeance is personified, derive their functions from Fate[5]; whence they are called, in mythical fashion, the sisters of the Fates[6]. Their mission is to pursue criminals, and crush them with misery and misfortune[7]. Their aspect is loathsome and horrible, so as to strike terror into the guilty soul.

But while the Furies are the subordinate instruments of vengeance, the general administration of the laws of Justice and Destiny is in the hands of Zeus. This point is clearly emphasised by Aeschylus. It is Zeus who sends the Furies on their errands[8]. Justice is the virgin daughter of Zeus[9]. Zeus 'guides by ancient rule the courses of Destiny[10].' No man can 'escape from Destiny, or transgress the mighty inexorable will of Zeus[11].' The chorus in the Choephori implore 'the all-powerful Fates to accomplish, with the aid of Zeus, the ends of Justice[12].' The function, then, of Zeus, as omnipotent ruler, is to govern the world in accordance with that law of

[1] Choeph. 957 *κρατεῖται δέ πως τὸ θεῖον τὸ μὴ | ὑπουργεῖν κακοῖς.*
[2] *Μοῖρα, Αἶσα, Δίκη, Ἀνάγκη.*
[3] Agam. 135–136. Choeph. 646, 647. Prom. 515, 516.
[4] Eum. 508–515.
[5] Ibid. 334, 335; 391, 392.
[6] Ibid. 961.
[7] Ibid. 334–340.
[8] Agam. 747.
[9] Sept. 662. Choeph. 949.
[10] Suppl. 673.
[11] Ibid. 1048, 1049.
[12] Choeph. 306–308.

Justice which has been ordained by Fate and Necessity as the established order of the universe. It is true that in the Prometheus his position is represented in a somewhat different light, and that he is there depicted as subject to the decrees of Fate, and ignorant of their tenor. But the description of Zeus, as given in the Prometheus, is altogether exceptional in this as well as in other respects; and the matter will be discussed more fully later on, when we come to the consideration of the individual plays.

The relation between Zeus and the Furies, as the administrators of justice, deserves more special notice. The Furies, and the gods of the underworld generally, belong to an earlier order of deities, and represent that inexorable spirit of justice which executes to the full the strict letter of the law, regardless of other considerations. They are relentless and incapable of compassion. Zeus and the Olympian gods, on the other hand, are of more recent origin, and their character is less severe, the justice which they administer being tempered with equity. The supremacy of Zeus, therefore, denotes the supremacy of the spirit over the letter, and of equity over law; and it is the constant object of Aeschylus to reconcile these two opposing forces, and to explain away the stories of conflict between the gods of Olympus and the gods of the underworld; to show, in other words, that the system of the universe is harmonious and consistent in all its parts[1].

Such being the scheme of divine government, as conceived by Aeschylus, in which the laws of eternal justice are administered by an all-powerful deity, it follows that injustice can never prosper, and that the punishment of sin is certain and inevitable. This doctrine was not a new one among the Greeks; it appears in Homer, and Hesiod, and other poets of an early date. But there is no Greek writer by whom it is brought forward with such persistency, and emphasised with such vigour and intensity, as by Aeschylus. It forms the basis of all his dramas. The inexorable character of the divine justice, and the certainty

[1] The whole of the Eumenides is an illustration of the statements in the above paragraph.

of the retribution which follows crime, are themes on which he is never weary of dilating, with an energy and splendour of diction which recall the utterances of the Hebrew prophets. 'Impious,' he says, 'are the thoughts of those who declare that the gods pay no heed to the sins of evil-doers[1].' 'As long as Zeus remains seated on his throne, the wicked shall suffer[2].' 'Whosoever commits all manner of transgressions, and swerves from right, he perforce in time shall lower sail, when trouble has overtaken him, and his yard-arms are breaking. Then he calls in his trouble to those who heed him not, and strives in vain amid the surge. And God laughs at the man of fiery heart, who boasted that no evil should come nigh him, when he sees him worn with inextricable woes, and ever failing to round the perilous promontory. And he perishes for ever, unwept, unseen, wrecking his former bliss on the shoals of justice[3].'

Nor is the punishment of crime confined to the person of the criminal; the vengeance of heaven extends still further, and falls upon innocent victims, visiting the sins of the father upon the children even to distant generations. When guilt has been once incurred, a curse descends upon the family of the offender, and infects it with an hereditary taint[4]. An Avenging Spirit is ever on the watch, and drives it on to fresh acts of wickedness[5]. One crime begets another, until the history of the race becomes a long record of evil and disastrous deeds.

This notion of an ancestral curse, which expresses in mythological form the belief in the remote and incalculable effects of sin, was likewise one of great antiquity among the Greeks, and was embodied in many of their ancient legends. It is employed by Aeschylus as the groundwork of several of his extant tragedies; and the mysterious working of the curse, as it descends from father to son, and blights the happiness of one generation after another, is painted in dark and terrible colours. A doctrine of

[1] Agam. 369–373.
[2] Ibid. 1563, 1564.
[3] Eum. 553–565.
[4] Sept. 832 *μέλαινα καὶ τελεία | γένεος Οἰδίπου τ' Ἀρά.* Choeph. 406.
[5] Agam. 1501 *ὁ παλαιὸς δρμὺς ἀλάστωρ.*

this kind, like the somewhat similar modern theory of the transmission of hereditary qualities, if pushed to extremes, could only end in fatalism and despair; and it has often been supposed that such is in reality the creed of Aeschylus, and that mankind are represented in his tragedies as the sport of a blind and capricious Destiny, which sweeps innocent and guilty into the same net. But Aeschylus had far too profound a conviction of the justice of Providence to acquiesce in dogmas of such a hopeless character. He is careful to warn us against this very conclusion, and to soften and modify the fatalistic rigour of the old belief. While recognising the baneful effects of sin even upon remote victims, he never doubts the freedom of man's will, or his power to avert calamity by keeping his hands free from evil. When a curse is upon a family, it predisposes them to crime; but there is no actual compulsion. It is their own vicious inclinations, combining with the promptings of the Avenging Spirit, which bring the curse into operation, and cause the evil to be perpetrated. This point is clearly brought forward in the conversation between Clytaemnestra and the chorus, after the murder of Agamemnon. Clytaemnestra pleads that it is not she, but the Avenger, that has done the deed. The chorus reject the plea with indignation. 'Who,' they reply, 'will bear witness that thou art guiltless of this murder? Yet the Avenger might help thee to accomplish it[1].'

In this reflexion of the chorus we have a definite statement of the opinion of Aeschylus, that the effect of hereditary guilt in a family was not so irresistible as to crush the free-will of its members, or to absolve them from responsibility. The same truth is enforced in the plots of his tragedies. There is a curse upon the house of Oedipus, which eventually leads the two brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, to their ruin. But they are neither of them guiltless; they bring the curse upon themselves through their own conduct, the one allowing his better judgement to be overborne by fraternal hatred, the other waging impious war against his native country. So too with the house

[1] Agam. 1407–1507 ὡς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ | τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρ|σων; | πῶς πῶς; πατρόθεν δὲ συλλή|πτωρ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀλάστωρ.

of Atreus. Clytaemnestra is an adulteress, and Agamemnon sacrifices the life of his daughter for ambitious purposes. Orestes alone is pure in his motives, and when he slays his mother, performs the deed as an act of strict justice, after long hesitation, at the express bidding of the oracle. Hence in his person the curse is expiated, and the family henceforth relieved from its calamities.

It is only guilt, therefore, which is punished by heaven; innocence and justice, on the other hand, are protected and rewarded. 'Zeus inclines the scales on either side, sending evil to the wicked, good to the just[1].' The Furies 'visit not the man of clean hands; he passes his life unscathed[2].' The old Greek opinion, that the gods look with envy upon the good fortune of men, and delight in visiting excessive prosperity with reverses, apart from the question of guilt or innocence, is expressly repudiated by Aeschylus[3]. 'It is an old saying,' he declares, 'that much prosperity begets misfortune. I hold a creed far apart from this. It is the impious deed which brings forth an offspring of woe, like its parent stock. But the house that loves justice shall flourish from generation to generation[4].' Yet he admits that wealth and prosperity are dangerous, often leading men into insolence and pride[5]. From pride comes delusion, 'the black irresistible deity,' and takes possession of the soul, uprooting the moral sense, and alluring the victim with seductive wiles into the meshes of calamity[6]. For such a man the only remedy is the discipline of adversity, which may restore him to a better frame of mind. For Zeus has appointed that 'suffering should bring instruction,' and it is 'a good thing to be taught wisdom by misfortune[7].'

[1] Suppl. 402–404.

[2] Eum. 313–315.

[3] Cp. Herod. 7. 10 *φιλέει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα πάντα κολούειν*, and the story about Polycrates of Samos.

[4] Agam. 950–962. These lines express the real sentiments of Aeschylus. But in the Persae he makes the Persian messenger use the ordinary popular language on the subject, and attribute the disasters of his countrymen to the jealousy of heaven. Cp. Pers. 361, 362 *ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ὡς ἤκουσεν, οὐ ξυνεὶς δολόν | Ἕλληνος ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲ τὸν θεῶν φθόνον.* The words of Agamemnon, on his arrival at the palace, also reflect the popular belief (Agam. 923, 924 *ἐν ποικίλοις δὲ θνητὸν ὄντα κάλλεσιν | βαίνειν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐδαμῶς ἀνεὺ φόβου*).

[5] Agam. 377–384, 470.

[6] Ibid. 770. Pers. 97.

[7] Agam. 176, 249. Eum. 520.

Lastly, as to the question of a future state. In the time of Aeschylus the old Homeric conception of the obscure and comfortless existence of the soul after death had been expanded, by the teachers of the Orphic school, into a definite creed concerning a future world of rewards and punishments. But this belief was confined to the sects of the initiated, and never appears to have formed a part of the ordinary Greek religion. Aeschylus, indeed, refers to it on three or four occasions, but only in a partial and incomplete manner. He holds out no prospect of future reward to the virtuous, all the blessings which he promises being confined to the present existence. His punishments, too, are mostly of the same kind; and though he sometimes speaks of the dead as still exposed to torment, yet in one of these places he mentions the belief as a report current among mankind, rather than as a conviction of his own[1]. Otherwise his description of the souls of the departed is in accordance with the ordinary superstition. Their existence is still dark and shadowy, as in Homer, and the feeling by which they are chiefly animated is a craving for vengeance upon those who may have injured them on earth. Thus Clytaemnestra is taunted by the other inhabitants of Hades because her murder is still unexpiated; and the chorus remind Orestes that 'the ravenous jaws of the funeral fire consume not the spirit of the dead,' but that he still cries for vengeance from beneath the ground[2]. Even this dim belief in a future state may have been introduced from dramatic necessity, and as forming an integral part of the legend, rather than from personal conviction; since in one of his fragments he enunciates the

[1] Suppl. 228–231 οὐδὲ μὴ 'ν Ἅιδου θανὼν | φύγῃ ματαίων αἰτίας, πράξας τάδε. | κἀκεῖ δικάζει· τἀμπλακήμαθ', ὡς λόγος, | Ζεὺς ἄλλος ἐν καμοῦσιν ὑστάτας δίκας. Cp. Suppl. 415 ἀλάστορα | ὃς οὐδ' ἐν Ἅιδου τὸν θανόντ' ἐλευθεροῖ. Eum. 267–275 καὶ ζῶντά σ' ἰσχνάνασ' ἀπάξομαι κάτω, | ἀντίποινα· ὡς τίνῃς ματροφόνου δύας. | ὄψει δὲ κεῖ τις ἄλλος ἡλιτεν βροτῶν | ἢ θεὸν ἢ ξένον | τιν' ἀσεβῶν ἢ τοκέας φίλους, | ἔχοντ' ἕκαστον τῆς δίκης ἐπάξια, | μέγας γὰρ Ἅιδης ἐστὶν εὔθυνος βροτῶν | ἔνερθε χθονός, | δελτογράφῳ δὲ πάντ' ἐπωπᾷ φρενί. Ibid. 335–340 μοῖρ' ἐπέκλωσεν ἐμπέδως ἔχειν, | θνατῶν τοῖσιν αὐτουργίαι συμπέσουσιν μάταιοι, | τοῖς ὁμαρτεῖν, ὄφρ' ἂν γᾶν ὑπέλθῃ· θανὼν δ' οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος.

[2] Eum. 95–99. Choeph. 324–331.

opinion that all things are indifferent to the dead, and that they feel neither pleasure nor pain[1].'

§ 7. *The Trilogy and Tetralogy.*

According to the regulations of the Athenian theatre, every poet who competed at the City Dionysia had to exhibit three tragedies and a satyric drama, the four plays being performed in succession in the course of the same day. This practice, though originally a mere matter of external convenience, was utilised by Aeschylus in a manner characteristic of his genius[2]. While previous poets had treated their four plays as isolated compositions, Aeschylus conceived the notion of combining them into a single whole, and of making his three tragedies represent three successive stages in some great tragic story, while the satyric drama brought the performance to a conclusion with a humorous scene out of the same legend. Hence the origin of trilogies and tetralogies. When the three tragedies were united by community of subject into a single composition, they were called a 'trilogy'; when the satyric play also treated of the same events, the group of four dramas was called a 'tetralogy[3].'

For a poet such as Aeschylus the new style of composition had many advantages. The lesson which he most desired to impress upon his audience was the disastrous effect of sin, not only upon the sinner himself, but also upon his remote descendants. Now it was impossible, in the brief compass of an ancient tragedy, to exhibit this idea effectively, or to trace the results of a crime from beginning to end. The trilogy

[1] Frag. 266 *καὶ τοὺς θανόντας εἰ θέλεις εὐεργετεῖν | εἶτ' οὖν κακουργεῖν, ἀμφιδεξίως ἔχει | τῷ μήτε χαίρειν μήτε λυπεῖσθαι φθιτούς.*

[2] There is no direct evidence that the system of tetralogies was invented by Aeschylus. But the system is so peculiarly akin to his genius, and so little in harmony with what we know of the pre-Aeschylean drama, that it may be ascribed to him with a fair amount of certainty.

[3] The terms 'trilogy' and 'tetralogy' were not apparently applied to *any* group of three or four plays produced by the same poet at the same festival, but only to those groups which dealt with a single subject. The general term for a series of plays exhibited by one poet at the same time was *διδασκαλία*. See Attic Theatre, p. 21.

supplied him with the desired opportunity, enabling him to extend his range, to cover long periods of time, and to display in consecutive dramas the abiding influence of the ancestral curse.

Of the various tetralogies which Aeschylus may be supposed to have written, only three are known with absolute certainty. The Oedipodeia traced the calamities of the house of Oedipus from the original crime of Laius down to the fratricidal combat between the brothers[1]. The subject of the Lycurgeia was the entrance of Dionysus into Thrace, the opposition which he encountered at the hands of Lycurgus, and the final establishment of his worship[2]. The Oresteia dealt with the gloomy history of the house of Pelops[3]. In addition to these three tetralogies it is probable, though not certain, that the legends about Hector, Ajax, Prometheus, and the daughters of Danaus, were treated in trilogic form[4]. Further than this we cannot go. Though the Phineus, Persae, Glaucus, and satyric Prometheus are known to have been exhibited at the same festival, it is difficult to believe that they formed a tetralogy, or to trace any plausible ground of connexion between plays of such varied contents[5].

The above examples, though limited in number, are sufficient to show that the trilogy was a pliant and flexible form of art, and capable of much variety of treatment. The connexion between the parts could be tightened or relaxed at will. The three tragedies might depend so closely on one another as to resemble three successive acts in the same play; or their

[1] Argum. Aesch. Septem, *ἐνίκα Λαΐῳ, Οἰδίποδι, Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας, Σφιγγὶ σατυρικῇ.*

[2] Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 135 *τὴν τετραλογίαν λέγει Λυκουργίαν· Ἠδωνούς, Βασσαρίδας, Νεανίσκους, Λυκοῦργον τὸν σατυρικόν.*

[3] Argum. Aesch. Agam. *πρῶτος Αἰσχύλος Ἀγαμέμνονι, Χοηφόροις, Εὐμενίσι, Προτεῖ σατυρικῷ.*

[4] These trilogies were probably composed as follows:—(1) *Προμηθεὺς δεσμώτης, Προμηθεὺς λυόμενος, Προμηθεὺς πυρφόρος,* (2) *Μυρμιδόνες, Νηρεΐδες, Ἕκτορος Λύτρα,* (3) *Ὅπλων Κρίσις, Θρῆσσαι, Σαλαμίνιαι,* (4) *Ἱκετίδες, Δαναΐδες, Αἰγύπτιοι.* For the evidence on the subject see Nauck's Trag. Graec. Fragmenta, and also the notices about the Prometheus and the Supplices in the next section.

[5] Argum. Aesch. Pers., *Αἰσχύλος ἐνίκα Φινεῖ, Πέρσαις, Γλαύκῳ, Προμηθεῖ.* See p. 103, note 2. The Prometheus here mentioned was the *Πυρκαεύς*, a satyric play. See Nauck, pp. 62 and 68.

mutual relationship might be more distant and general, like that between the first and second parts of Henry the Fourth. In the Oedipodeia, for example, there was a wide interval of time between the separate portions, and the trilogy as a whole lacked artistic completeness, being brought to a conclusion while the curse was still unexpiated, and further disasters were in store[1]. In the Oresteia, on the other hand, the intervals are far less considerable, and the plot reaches a satisfactory termination in the acquittal of Orestes. In the Lycurgeia the connexion appears to have been closer still, the action moving on rapidly from play to play, as in a single drama[2]. Again, the different sections of a trilogy, though connected in subject, might be complete and perfect in themselves; or they might derive a large part of their significance from that which succeeded or went before. Thus the Agamemnon, even when taken alone, is intelligible throughout; while the meaning of the Prometheus has been much obscured by the loss of the continuation[3].

It is useless, therefore, as these examples show, to endeavour to lay down fixed and invariable rules concerning the method of trilogic composition, or to seek for uniformity of type in productions which admitted of so much diversity. The earlier critics, taking the Oresteia as their model, evolved many fanciful theories on this subject. According to some, there was a regular system in the combination of the three plays, action predominating in the first, music in the second, and scenic illusion in the third, so that the minds and ears and eyes of the audience might be successively gratified[4]. Others contended that the interest in the third play was always of a mythical and speculative kind[5]. These notions, however, and others of the

[1] See the notice of the Septem in the next section.

[2] See Hermann, Op. 5. 3-30. The course of the trilogy seems to have been as follows. The Edoni contained the invasion of Thrace by Dionysus, and his defeat and the capture of his train by Lycurgus. In the Bassarides the Bacchae were released again, and put Orpheus to death. In the Neanisci the worship of Dionysus was finally established, and Lycurgus paid the penalty for his impiety by death.

[3] On this point see the notice of the Prometheus in the next section.

[4] Hermann, Op. 2, p. 311 foll.

[5] Müller, Dissertation on the Eumenides, p. 212.

same sort, depend on the mistaken hypothesis that every trilogy was constructed in the same fashion as the Oresteia, and make no allowance for possible deviations. Hence, though widely accepted in former times, they are now generally abandoned.

Though the form of the tetralogy was a favourite with Aeschylus, there is no reason to suppose that it was employed by him in all his dramatic exhibitions. His earliest plays were probably written, like those of his predecessors, without any attempt at mutual connexion; and even in later times, as we see from the Persae, the new method was occasionally abandoned. This view is further confirmed by the titles of the lost dramas, several of which, such as the Sisyphus, the Ixion, and the Atalanta, appear to occupy an isolated position, and hardly admit of being arranged in combinations. It is possible, too, that on certain occasions the system might be adopted only to a partial extent. A trilogy might conclude with a satyric play on a different subject, as seems to have been the case with the Promethean series[1]. Again, if the nature of the legend suggested such a course, two of the tragedies might be written in connexion, while the third stood by itself. Thus the Mysians and the Telephus, the Lemnians and the Philoctetes, are instances of pairs of tragedies for which no third drama can be suggested from the other titles on the list. Owing, then, to this uncertainty as to the practice of Aeschylus, it is dangerous to assume the existence of any tetralogy beyond those for which there is some direct evidence; and the various attempts which have been made to combine the whole of the lost plays into connected groups are obviously of very little value[2].

§ 8. *The Extant Plays.*

The seven extant tragedies of Aeschylus owe their preservation to the fact of their having been chosen, at a remote period,

[1] No satyric play is mentioned in connexion with this trilogy. The Προμηθεὺς Πυρκαεύς, which we should naturally suppose to have formed the concluding play of the series, is known to have belonged to another combination. See above, p. 97, note 5.

[2] Hermann, Op. (passim). Welcker, Die Aeschylische Trilogie.

to serve as representative specimens for purposes of study and school instruction. The selection appears to have been made not later than the fifth century of the Christian era, when similar groups were also formed in the case of the other principal dramatists, seven plays being taken from Sophocles, nine from Euripides, and eleven from Aristophanes[1]. The thirty-four dramas selected in this manner supplied the ordinary course of study during the Middle Ages, and were reproduced in innumerable copies. But towards the close of the Byzantine epoch, with the general decline of literature, the list was considerably reduced in size, three plays from each dramatist being now considered sufficient[2]. The three chosen from Aeschylus were the Septem, the Persae, and the Prometheus; and this smaller group henceforth began to monopolise the attention of scholars, the Agamemnon and the Eumenides being read but rarely, while the Choephori and the Supplices were altogether neglected[3]. Owing to this

[1] The extant plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, together with the nine plays of Euripides which were in general circulation during the Middle Ages, are all accompanied with brief scholia, compiled about the fifth century A. D. from the vast stores of Alexandrian learning. But it so happens that ten additional plays of Euripides have been preserved by the lucky survival of a couple of manuscripts. These ten plays, however, are without scholia of any kind. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that the remaining plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes were also without scholia; and that the attention of scholars had come to be confined, as early as the fifth century A. D., to the thirty-four selected plays. See Dindorf, Prefaces to Euripides and Aristophanes.

[2] This is proved by the fact that while, in the case of the other plays, the old fifth-century scholia are little altered by the later Byzantines, the scholia of the three selected plays are expanded to immense bulk by additions and interpolations. The plays chosen were, from Sophocles, the Ajax, Electra, and Oedipus Rex; from Euripides, the Hecuba, Orestes, and Phoenissae; from Aristophanes, the Nubes, Ranae, and Plutus.

Sittl (Griech. Lit. 3, p. 266) supposes that, in the case of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the selection of three plays dates back as early as the fifth century. His reason is that Eugenius, a grammarian of that date, wrote a metrical analysis of fifteen plays from the tragic poets (Suidas, v. Εὐγένιος· ἔγραψε κωλομετρίαν τῶν μελικῶν Αἰσχύλου, Σοφοκλέους καὶ Εὐριπίδου, ἀπὸ δραμάτων ιε'); and he assumes that the fifteen plays consisted of three from Aeschylus, three from Sophocles, and nine from Euripides. But the evidence is hardly conclusive. Eugenius, as far as we know, may have commented on five plays from each poet.

[3] The old scholia of the Septem, Prometheus, and Persae are largely

cause the manuscripts of the first three plays are much more numerous than those of the other four, and their text has been preserved in a more satisfactory condition.

The principle by which the early scholars were guided, in their choice of representative dramas, is not always easy to discover; but as far as Aeschylus is concerned, the selection has been more than usually judicious. The seven remaining tragedies illustrate in the most interesting manner the gradual development of his art. The Supplices provides us with a specimen of his earliest style, when tragedy was still more lyrical than dramatic; the Persae and the Septem represent his middle period; while the Prometheus and the Oresteia exhibit the culmination of his powers. The Oresteia, also, has a unique value as the sole surviving example of a trilogy, and forms the principal source of information concerning a mode of composition which would otherwise have been enveloped in obscurity. Moreover, the intrinsic beauty and greatness of the selected plays are no less conspicuous than their historical interest, and most of them appear to have been highly celebrated in antiquity. The Prometheus and the Choephori are among the few Aeschylean dramas mentioned in the Poetics; the fame of the Oresteia is proved by the lengthy criticisms in the Frogs; and the Persae and the Septem are expressly cited by Aristophanes as two of the finest tragedies of Aeschylus[1].

(1) *The Supplices.*

The Supplices is undoubtedly the earliest of the seven plays, though its exact date cannot be determined[2]. In all probability

interpolated by the Byzantines; the scholia of the Agamemnon and Eumenides only slightly, those of the Choephori and Supplices not at all. See Dindorf, Praef. to Schol. Aesch. p. v.

[1] Aristot. Poet. cc. 4 & 18. Aristoph. Ran. 1021–1026, 1124–1176.

[2] Müller (Diss. on Eumenides, p. 84), having regard to the praise of Argos with which the play abounds, contended that it was written about 461, when Athens and Argos were entering into alliance. But this theory, which would make the Supplices one of the poet's latest works, cannot be seriously maintained. The prominence of the chorus throughout the play, the slightness of the dialogue, and the insignificance of the second actor, are decisive on the point. Mr. Tucker's view (Introd. to Suppl. pp. xxi–xxiv) is much more probable. He sees in the exaltation of Greeks over

it formed one of a group dealing with the flight of the fifty daughters of Danaus, the pursuit by the fifty sons of Aegyptus, the enforced marriage, the murder of the bridegrooms, and the trial of Hypermnestra, who alone showed compassion upon her husband. But the constituent parts of the trilogy are not fully known. All that can be regarded as certain is that the Danaides also formed one of the series, that it came after the Supplices, and that it treated of the marriage[1]. Whether the third play was the Aegyptians or the Makers of the Bridal Chamber, is a matter for speculation[2]. It is also doubtful whether the Supplices was placed first or second in the combination. The fulness of the explanations at the commencement of the play are in favour of the former view; but the absence, on the other hand, of any satisfactory reason for the horror with which the maidens regarded marriage with their cousins, would appear to point to the existence of a preceding drama, in which this matter was more fully emphasised.

The structure of the Supplices has been analysed in the previous chapter, and its archaic character explained[3]. In all other respects the play, in spite of its early date, reveals the powers of Aeschylus as already in their full maturity. The language is as splendid and picturesque, and the tone as impressive, as in any other drama. The prevailing motive, here as elsewhere, is the justice of the gods, and the downfall of insolence and impiety; and this depth of purpose is all the more remarkable, since the subject of the plot—the abhorrence of the fugitives for the proposed marriage—was not of a kind to

Egyptians (cp. especially lines 952, 953) an exaltation of West over East, and supposes an allusion to the approaching invasion of the Persians. He would therefore assign the Supplices to about 491 B.C. But as a matter of fact none of the references in the play are sufficiently distinct to serve as marks of date.

[1] Strabo's quotation (5. p. 221), Αἰσχύλος . . . ἐν Ἱκέτισιν ἢ Δαναΐσι, seems to show that the two plays were connected. The lines in one of the fragments of the Danaides (ἕως ἐγείρω πρευμενεῖς τοὺς νυμφίους|νόμοισι θέντων(?) σὺν κόροις τε καὶ κόραις, Nauck, p. 15) apparently refer to the marriage of the cousins.

[2] Αἰγύπτιοι, Θαλαμοποιοί. Nothing is known about the contents of these two plays, either of which, to judge from the titles, might have been the third in the trilogy. On the whole question see Hermann, Op. 2, pp. 319–336.

[3] See above, p. 35.

naturally suggest such treatment. As a dramatic composition, the effectiveness of the tragedy lies, not so much in the dialogue, as in the long choral odes, with their vivid picture of the emotions of the suppliant maidens, clinging to the altar for protection, and now holding out their hands in prayer to the gods, now shrinking in terror before the threats of the herald, now pouring out their gratitude to the king of Argos.

(2) *The Persae.*

The Persae, the next in date of the seven plays, is the only surviving Greek tragedy which treats of a non-mythical subject. It was exhibited in 472, nearly seven years after the final defeat of the Persians, whose overthrow it celebrates [1]. Though produced, after the usual fashion, along with three other plays, it appears to have been unconnected with the rest in point of contents [2]. Aristophanes cites an incident from the Persae which is not to be found in the present text; and this fact has led some critics to suggest that there were two versions of the play, the one from which Aristophanes quotes being that performed at Syracuse by the request of Hieron. But the rival

[1] Argum. Pers. Aristophanes seems to imply that the Persae came *after* the Septem (Ran. 1026 *εἶτα διδάξας Πέρσας μετὰ τοῦτο*). But this is probably mere carelessness.

[2] Argum. Pers. *Αἰσχύλος ἐνίκα Φινεῖ, Πέρσαις, Γλαύκῳ, Προμηθεῖ.* Welcker (Trilogie, p. 470 foll.) tries to make a trilogy out of the first three plays, based on the great conflict between Greeks and barbarians. He suggests that in the Phineus the Argonauts were entertained by king Phineus, who told them about the coming Trojan war, and other causes of collision between East and West. But there is nothing in the fragments of the Phineus to support this view. As for the Glaucus of the didascalia, it is uncertain whether the *Γλαῦκος Πόντιος* or the *Γλαῦκος Ποτνιεύς* is intended. The original text has merely *Γλαῦκος*, and *Ποτνιεύς*, which appears in some editions, was added by a later hand. If we assume that the *Γλαῦκος Ποτνιεύς* (i.e. the Glaucus of Potniae who was torn to pieces by his own mares) is meant, it is difficult to conceive any possible connexion between this play and the Persae. Welcker, however, assumes that the *Γλαῦκος Πόντιος* (i.e. Glaucus the sea god) is denoted; and from the fact that Himera of Sicily is mentioned in one of the fragments, he infers that the god Glaucus, in the course of the play, gave an account of some visit to Sicily, during which he had been a witness of the battle between Gelon and the Carthaginians at Himera. But the whole theory depends upon a series of conjectures and assumptions; and this mixture of legend and history is perhaps hardly in the manner of Greek tragedy.

opinion is perhaps more probable, that there was only a single version, and that Aristophanes was somewhat confused in his recollections[1].

In no work of Aeschylus is the grandeur of his mind more strikingly revealed. In the hands of an ordinary poet the play might easily have been converted into a mere manifestation of national pride. But the Persae is pitched in a higher key. The tone is one, not of triumph, but of solemn warning, addressed to victors as well as vanquished. The truth continually enforced is the certainty of the retribution which awaits the oppressor. In the great history of the Persian War, that which strikes the imagination of Aeschylus is, not so much the struggle of liberty against despotism, or of Greek against barbarian, as the spectacle of divine justice humbling the pride of nations. To him, as to the old Hebrew prophets, history is a revelation of the will of providence; and the ruin of armies, and the overthrow of nations, are but examples of the handiwork of God.

The purpose of the tragedy, then, is essentially a moral one: the glory and triumph of the Greeks are only incidentally displayed. At the same time no device can be conceived, which would have placed the victory of the Greeks in a clearer light than the device adopted by Aeschylus. In laying the scene in Persia he made his countrymen the witnesses, as it were, of the ruin and degradation of their adversaries; and it is easy to imagine the emotions which such a performance must have excited in the minds of the Athenian audience. Most of them had taken an active part in the great events described. In the drama which was now unfolded before their eyes they saw their enemies receiving, in abject despair, the successive tidings of calamity; they heard the stately narrative of those life and death struggles from which they had just emerged; and they beheld the actual workings of that

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1028 ἐχάρην γοῦν, ἡνίκ' ἀπηγγέλθη περὶ Δαρείου τεθνεῶτος, | ὁ χορὸς δ' εὐθὺς τὼ χεῖρ' ὠδὶ συγκρούσας εἶπεν Ἰαυοῖ. The passage may not improbably be regarded as an inaccurate recollection of the appearance of Darius ghost in the existing Persae. See Schol. ad loc.

oppressive despotism from which they themselves had narrowly escaped. A spectacle of this kind must have gone to their hearts with a directness which no legend could hope to equal.

It has often been observed that no individual Greek is mentioned by name in the course of the play. The omission is remarkable, and was due, not so much to the fear of exciting jealousy and party feeling, as to the desire of avoiding everything familiar, and of imparting a sort of mysterious dignity to the tragedy, by confining it to strange scenes and distant peoples. The usual occupants of the tragic stage being gods and heroes, when a poet ventured to descend from this ideal region into the atmosphere of ordinary life, it was necessary to retain as much as possible of the accustomed splendour in the performance. This result might be attained, in part, by the exclusion of familiar names and places, and the selection of things marvellous and unknown. As Racine observes, the effect upon the general public is much the same, whether the action of a play be separated from present surroundings by a thousand years, or by a thousand leagues[1]. To some such feeling is to be ascribed that air of remoteness from everyday life which pervades the Persae.

The sense of strangeness is intensified by the local colouring given to the play. Many instances are to be found. Long enumerations of Persian names, and barbarous exclamations of sorrow, are of frequent occurrence[2]. The chorus of elders address the queen with oriental adulation as 'wife and mother of a god[3]'; and are so terrified by the sight of Darius, that they dare not look in his face, or answer his questions[4]. Atossa's high-flown description of her libations—'drops from the flower-working bee, watery tricklings of virgin fountain, splendour of ancient vine, stainless draught of untamed mother'—suggests the extravagance of oriental imagination[5]. The final scene, too, in which Xerxes and the chorus, amid wild and barbarous

[1] Préface de Bajazet, quoted by M. Patin, Éschyle. p. 211.

[2] Pers. 1-58, 302-330, 955-1001. Cp. Schol. on 116 ὀά· Περσικὸν θρήνημα.

[3] Pers. 157.

[4] Ibid. 694-696.

[5] Ibid. 607-618.

music, abandon themselves to paroxysms of sorrow, is no doubt intended as a picture of Persian effeminacy[1]. Yet it is to be observed, at the same time, that Aeschylus, like Shakespeare, and most early poets, shows little regard for archaeological accuracy. The gods invoked by the Persians are the ordinary Greek gods, Zeus, Hermes, and Apollo[2]; a statue of Apollo stands, in Greek fashion, before the royal palace; the offerings on the tomb of Darius are Greek, and not Persian[3].

(3) *The Septem.*

The Septem was brought out in 467, five years after the Persae[4]. The subject of the trilogy to which it belonged was the ruin of the house of Laius, owing to the presence of an hereditary curse. In the Laius, the first of the three plays, the origin of the evil was explained. Laius had been warned by the oracle at Delphi that 'if he died without offspring he would preserve the city[5]'; but he impiously disregarded the commands of Apollo, begot a son called Oedipus, exposed him on Cithaeron, and so brought his family under the ban of heaven[6]. In the Oedipus the results of his conduct began to be seen. Oedipus, now grown to manhood, had slain his father unawares, and become king of Thebes. On discovering his incestuous marriage with his mother, he put out his eyes in a fit of despair, and pronounced over his two sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, a fatal imprecation, 'that they shall divide their inheritance with the sword in such a manner as to obtain equal shares[7].' This imprecation is fulfilled in the Septem. Eteocles, now ruler of Thebes, is attacked by Polyneices with an Argive host; the two brothers slay each other in battle; and the share of the inheritance which each of them obtains is a grave in Theban territory.

[1] Pers. 908–1076. Cp. 937 *Μαριανδυνοῦ θρηνητῆρος πέμψω ἰαχάν*, 1054 *ἐπιβῶ τὸ Μύσιον.*

[2] Ibid. 205, 532, 629, 915.

[3] Ibid. 205, 607 foll.

[4] Argum. Sept. *ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Θεαγενίδου ὀλυμπιάδι οᾳ· ἐνίκα Λαΐῳ, Οἰδίποδι, Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας, Σφιγγὶ σατυρικῇ.*

[5] Sept. 745–750.

[6] Ibid. 741–752. Frag. Aesch. 122 (Nauck).

[7] Sept. 778–791, 907, 908. Frag. Aesch. 173 (Nauck).

The play would naturally conclude with the deaths of the two brothers. But an extra scene is appended, in which Antigone proclaims her resolve to defy the laws, and to bury Polyneices, in spite of the edict prohibiting his interment. Many critics regard this episode as a later interpolation, inserted in imitation of the Antigone of Sophocles; and contend that it not only spoils the conclusion of the trilogy, but is also shown to be spurious by the fact of its requiring three actors[1]. But there is nothing in the language of the scene to suggest the hand of an interpolator. And the difficulty about the actors is of little moment, since, even supposing that a third actor was as yet unknown, the part of Ismene might easily have been taken by one of those extra performers, who were frequently employed on the tragic stage[2]. There is also the fact that in Sophocles the prohibition of the burial comes from Creon, while in Aeschylus it comes from the people of Thebes; and this difference, though a mere matter of detail, is against the theory of Sophoclean influence[3]. Moreover, the solemn dirge over the dead bodies, while thoroughly Aeschylean in style, was foreign to the taste of later generations, and is hardly likely to have been interpolated.

Even on aesthetic grounds the scene may be defended. It is true that it interferes with the symmetrical construction of the trilogy, suggesting coming misfortunes, instead of rounding off the calamities of the past. But at the same time it affords a refreshing contrast to the preceding horrors. Up to this point the plot of the three tragedies had been a long record of sin and violence, ending with the unnatural hatred of the brothers. The courage and sisterly devotion of Antigone relieves the general darkness of the picture, and sheds a gleam of light over the final scene in the gloomy history of the family.

The Septem is a good example of the transitional stage

[1] See, among others, Bergk, Griech. Lit. 3, p. 303.

[2] The third actor was introduced by Sophocles, who began to exhibit in 468. Hence it is just possible that the use of the third actor may have been known as early as 467. On the extra performers, or παραχορηγήματα, see Attic Theatre, p. 212.

[3] Sept. 1005, 1006.

between the old choral songs and the regular drama[1]. The greater portion of the tragedy is lyrical and descriptive. We are placed in the centre of a besieged city, and the air is full of rumours and alarms. Long choral dances exhibit the frantic terror of the women; while speeches and addresses, fired with warlike sentiment, explain the preparations for attack and defence. Suddenly, when the performance is well advanced, we reach the point of dramatic interest, and the rest of the action is rapid and decisive. Eteocles announces his ominous resolve to confront his brother, and rushes forth to the combat. The news of the issue speedily arrives, the corpses of the two brothers are brought in, and the play ends with the lamentation of the sisters and the heroism of Antigone.

A spirit of martial enthusiasm pervades the whole work, which was described by the ancients, and not without justice, as 'full of the war-god[2].' The most celebrated scene is the one relating to the fourteen champions, which is constructed with as much symmetry of arrangement as a choral ode. As the messenger describes each Argive chieftain, Eteocles answers him, in a speech of almost equal length, with an account of the rival Theban hero; and the pairs of speeches are concluded with a lyrical appeal from the chorus. Thus the whole episode consists of seven symmetrical parts. It is essentially undramatic

[1] Such has hitherto been the opinion of every critic. Dr. Verrall, however, in the Introduction to his edition of the play, takes a different view, and regards the Septem as a remarkable example of skill in dramatic construction. He considers (Introd. p. xxxvii) that 'for growth of interest up to the climax it has only one superior in ancient literature, the plot of the Oedipus Tyrannus.' The long central scene, in which the rival champions are described, and which has generally been regarded as epic rather than dramatic in tone, has, according to his view, an intense tragic significance, the point being that, as each pair of champions is successively told off, the audience perceive with increasing horror that the final pair must inevitably consist of the two brothers, and that a fratricidal conflict must ensue. This theory is worked out by him with the greatest skill and ingenuity. But it may perhaps be objected (1) that if this had been the main motive of the scene, Aeschylus would have made it more apparent to the ordinary reader and spectator, (2) that in any case the descriptions of the champions are too long and elaborate for any *dramatic* purpose. Such appears to have been the opinion of Euripides: see the next page, note 1.

[2] Aristoph. Ran. 1021 Ἄρεως μεστόν. Plut. Quaest. Symp. 7. 10.

in tone, and its improbability has been noticed by Euripides, who points out the absurdity of such lengthy narratives when the enemy is at the very walls[1]. But it is a magnificent specimen of descriptive power, and the splendour and incisiveness of the language redeem it from any charge of monotony. It appears to have been accompanied, like other narrative speeches in the Greek drama, by illustrative gesture on the part of the chorus; and it was probably in this scene that Telestes, the dancer of Aeschylus, obtained his celebrity, on account of the skill with which he depicted in dumb show the martial fury of the combatants[2].

(4) *The Prometheus.*

Though the date of the Prometheus Bound is nowhere mentioned, the general structure of the play, in which the choral odes are completely overshadowed by the dialogue, proves that it came after the Septem, and was one of the poet's latest works[3]. There is also little doubt that it formed part of a trilogy, along with Prometheus Unbound and Prometheus the Fire-Bringer[4]. The subject of the plot is the punishment of Prometheus for raising mankind from their brutish condition,

[1] Eur. Phoen. 749–752 *τάξω λοχαγοὺς πρὸς πύλαισιν, ὡς λέγεις, | ἴσους ἴσοισι πολεμίοισιν ἀντιθείς. | ὄνομα δ' ἑκάστου διατριβὴ πολλὴ λέγειν, | ἐχθρῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν καθημένων.* Euripides avoids the difficulty by placing his description of the champions at the beginning of the play, in a scene between Antigone and the attendant, who view the Argive host from the top of a tower.

[2] Athen. p. 22 *Ἀριστοκλῆς γοῦν φησιν ὅτι Τελέστης, ὁ Αἰσχύλου ὀρχηστής, οὕτως ἦν τεχνίτης, ὥστε ἐν τῷ ὀρχεῖσθαι τοὺς Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας φανερὰ ποιῆσαι τὰ πράγματα δι' ὀρχήσεως.* See the Attic Theatre, p. 289.

[3] The reference to the eruption of Etna (ll. 366–372), which occurred in 475 B.C., only shows that the Prometheus was written after that date. If three actors were required in the opening scene, it would place the Prometheus at any rate after 468 B.C. But the part of *Κράτος* may have been taken by a *παραχορήγημα* (see Attic Theatre, p. 212). The style of the play is the only safe criterion of date.

[4] The Schol. on Prom. 511 (*ἐν γὰρ τῷ ἑξῆς δράματι λύεται*) proves that the *Προμηθεὺς Λυόμενος* followed the *Δεσμώτης*. The Schol. on Prom. 94 (*τὸν μυριετῆ· πολυετῆ, ἐν γὰρ τῷ Πυρφόρῳ τρεῖς μυριάδας φησὶ δεδέσθαι αὐτόν*) would show that there was a connexion between the *Πυρφόρος* and the *Δεσμώτης*. It is true that in the *Δεσμώτης* it is said that the imprisonment of Prometheus will last for thirteen generations, till the birth of Hercules (Prom. 774). But the *τρεῖς μυριάδες* of the *Πυρφόρος* may be merely a vague phrase for a long lapse of time, like *μυριετής*.

and teaching them the use of fire and various other arts, in defiance of the commands of Zeus. For this offence he is chained to a rock near the ocean, and finally plunged into the depths of Tartarus; but it is intimated, in the course of the drama, that he will eventually be delivered by a descendant of Io, and that Zeus will be compelled to consent to his release, in order to learn from him the secret of a certain danger by which he is threatened[1].

After the Prometheus Bound came the Prometheus Unbound, in which the liberation of the hero was accomplished. The scene, in this latter play, was laid in the Caucasus, where Prometheus again stood fixed to a rock, having been removed from Tartarus. The action commenced with the approach of a chorus of brother Titans, who came to condole with the victim, and to whom Prometheus related, in a long speech, the story of his sufferings, and of the vulture which gnawed his liver. Then Hercules appeared upon the scene, and after being told of the laborious wanderings which awaited him, shot the vulture and freed Prometheus. Zeus was informed of the danger of his intended marriage with Thetis, and his anger finally appeased[2]. From this brief summary, which may be gathered from the existing fragments, we see that the play had many points of similarity to the Prometheus Bound. The central figure in both dramas was Prometheus chained to a crag; the chorus of sympathetic Titans corresponded to the chorus of ocean nymphs; and the narrative of Hercules' journey to the West served as a sort of pendant to Io's wanderings in the East.

The remaining play of the trilogy was Prometheus the Fire-Bringer. It used to be commonly supposed that this tragedy was the first of the series, and described the outbreak of the feud between Zeus and Prometheus. But the causes of the feud are explained in the Prometheus Bound with so much completeness, that it is scarcely conceivable that the same subject had already been treated in a previous play. It seems

[1] Prom. 755–775.
[2] Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. pp. 63–68.

more likely, therefore, that this Prometheus was the last of the group, and that it was a drama of local and patriotic interest, commemorating the introduction into Athens of the cultus of Prometheus the Fire-Bringer[1]. Prometheus was worshipped at Athens under this title with special reverence. There was an annual torch-race in his honour; the mark of his footstep was shown on a rock in the Acropolis; and an altar in the temple of Pallas preserved the memory of his reconciliation with Hephaestus[2]. These various features of local religion might easily have been worked up into a grand concluding drama, similar to the final scene in the Eumenides, where the establishment of the Furies in their new home at Athens is also celebrated with patriotic pride.

The great difficulty in the Prometheus Bound is to find any justification for the odious conduct of Zeus, and for the severity with which he punishes Prometheus on account of his services towards mankind. Not that it is necessary to suppose, with some scholars, that the people of Athens must have been shocked by such a representation. According to the popular belief the gods, though superior to men in strength and power, were swayed by the same passions and animosities; and the picture of Zeus as a powerful despot, crushing all opposition to his will, in spite of the nobility of his victim, would scarcely have offended the religious conscience of an Athenian audience. The difficulty is to reconcile this conception of Zeus with the conception which prevails in the other plays of Aeschylus, where he is depicted as the personification of perfect justice.

The critics generally agree in supposing that the mystery was solved in the later plays of the trilogy. But they differ in their views as to the nature of the solution. Some contend that the purpose of the whole composition was to portray, as in the Eumenides, the gradual triumph of new principles over old, and the victory of the mild Olympian gods over the rude earth-

[1] This theory was first developed by Westphal (Prolegomena zu Aeschylus Tragödien, p. 207). Cp. Schol. Prom. 94 ἐν γὰρ τῷ Πυρφόρῳ τρεῖς μυριάδας φησὶ δεδέσθαι, where the tense of δεδέσθαι seems to show that the Πυρφόρος was the *last*, and not the *first*, of the series.

[2] Paus. 1. 30. 2. Schol. Soph. Oed. Col. 55.

born deities[1]. But there is no trace of any such feeling in the Prometheus Bound. On the contrary, Zeus is there the representative of brute force and selfish despotism; sympathy and humanity are the qualities of Prometheus. Others imagine that the scheme of the trilogy was to exhibit the gradual development of Zeus' character. In the Prometheus Bound he is represented as a new ruler, setting at defiance the laws of universal justice, typified by Prometheus and the gods of the underworld; while the reconciliation effected in the following play was the result of the slow purification of his soul, brought about by the lapse of ages[2]. But here again we should have expected to find even in the first of the three dramas some glimpses into the motive of the whole trilogy, and some more plausible explanation of the attitude of Zeus. We should not have expected to find Prometheus so entirely in the right, and Zeus so entirely in the wrong.

Perhaps the truth may be that even in the concluding plays there was no satisfactory solution of the difficulty. Aeschylus may have fallen into one of those inconsistencies to which he was often exposed, in his attempt to ennoble the ancient mythology. The story of Prometheus, resolute in self-devotion and unshaken by threats of vengeance, offered a splendid subject for tragedy. It is possible, therefore, that Aeschylus, attracted by this idea, threw his whole soul into the delineation of the heroic Titan, and, for the purpose of effective contrast, left Zeus as he found him in the legend, regardless of the inconsistency with his usual utterances about the supreme being. Other great writers have not always been successful in avoiding similar difficulties; and the despicable character attributed to Aeneas, in the course of his relations with Dido, naturally suggests itself as a parallel instance. But the best example of all is to be found in Milton. The republican poet, urged on by his dramatic sympathies and by his love of freedom and independence, has drawn the 'unconquerable will' of Satan, and his 'courage never to submit or yield,'

[1] E.g. K. O. Müller, Greek Literature, p. 328 foll.

[2] E.g. De Faye, Étude sur les idées religieuses et morales d'Aeschyle.

with so much force and enthusiasm, as to disturb the ethical balance of his general scheme; and there is some justification for Shelley's criticism, that Satan is the real hero of Paradise Lost[1].

In spite of these objections the Prometheus is one of the noblest works of Aeschylus. The central idea of the play—that of a god submitting of his own free will to ages of torment, in order to rescue mankind from their degradation—is a conception so sublime, and so alien to the usual spirit of Greek religion, that some of the early fathers perceived in it a dim presentiment of Christian doctrine[2]. But the drama may be regarded from many points of view. It may be looked upon, not only as a noble example of self-sacrifice, but also as a type of man's struggle against destiny, or of the conflict between liberty and oppression[3]. It will affect different minds in different ways; and it would be hazardous to affirm that any one of these ideas was foreign to the purpose of Aeschylus. Hence it is unnecessary, with the older critics, to endeavour to define the motive of the composition in a single phrase[4]. The great charm of the Prometheus Bound lies in its varied and perennial suggestiveness.

The plot is simple in the extreme. Prometheus, bound to a rock, discourses about his sufferings with Oceanus and the ocean nymphs, refuses to reveal to Hermes the fatal secret of which he is possessed, and is finally plunged into an abyss beneath the earth. The thinness of the material is supplemented by the introduction of Io, who comes in the course of her wanderings to the place where Prometheus is chained, tells him of her past adventures, and is informed of her future destiny. Her entrance upon the scene, though purely casual, is to some extent justified by her connexion with the plot, since it is one of her descendants who eventually liberates the prisoner. Moreover, the narratives delivered by herself and

[1] Preface to the Prometheus Unbound.

[2] Tertull. Advers. Marc. 1. 1 (quoted by Patin, Eschyle, p. 268).

[3] Cp. Byron's Prometheus, vol. x, p. 289 (edition of 1832). Passow, Opusc. p. 20.

[4] For their various theories see Bernhardy, Griech. Lit. 2. 2. p. 271.

Prometheus add lightness and variety to the general effect, and carry the mind away from gloomy surroundings into lands of romance and marvel. But the length to which they are protracted is a reminiscence of the old style of drama.

In modern times the Prometheus has been the most widely popular, and the most frequently imitated, of all the plays of Aeschylus. Shelley published a continuation of it. Byron, besides composing a lyric on the subject, confessed, in one of his letters, that the Prometheus Bound had influenced everything he ever wrote[1]. Calderon was the author of an allegorical statue of Prometheus; and Goethe began a drama founded on that of Aeschylus, but left it unfinished. Other imitations by lesser poets are too numerous to mention[2].

(5) *The Oresteia.*

The Agamemnon, Choephori, and Eumenides were the last tragedies composed by Aeschylus, and were produced in 458, two years before his death, along with the satyric drama Proteus[3]. The tetralogy as a whole was called the Oresteia, a name which, whether due to Aeschylus or not, appears to have been in use at any rate as early as the time of Aristophanes[4]. The contents of the Proteus are unknown, and its

[1] Byron's Works, vol. iv, p. 67: 'Of the Prometheus of Aeschylus I was passionately fond as a boy. . . . Indeed that and the Medea were the only ones, except the Seven before Thebes, which ever much pleased me. The Prometheus, if not exactly in my plan (i. e. concerning Manfred), has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or anything that I have written.'

[2] See Patin, Eschyle, pp. 303, 304.

[3] Argum. Aesch. Agam.

[4] Aristoph. Ran. 1119 *καὶ μὴν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς τοὺς προλόγους σου τρέψομαι . . . πρῶτον δέ μοι τὸν ἐξ Ὀρεστείας λέγε.* This passage presents some difficulty, because (1) there is no prologue to the *Ὀρεστεία* as a whole, and (2) that from which Aeschylus proceeds to quote is the prologue of the Choephori. Why this latter should have been styled by Aristophanes the 'prologue from the Oresteia' is a puzzling question. Some critics suggest that the term *Ὀρεστεία* was originally the name, not of the tetralogy, but of the Choephori, which dealt with the vengeance of Orestes. But (1) Aristotle's Didascaliae gave *Ὀρεστεία* as the name of the tetralogy: cp. Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 1124 *τετραλογίαν φέρουσι τὴν Ὀρεστείαν αἱ Διδασκαλίαι, Ἀγαμέμνονα, Χοηφόρους, Εὐμενίδας, Πρωτέα σατυρικόν.* (2) There is another example in Aristophanes of a passage being cited from the tetralogy, instead of from the individual play, viz. Thesm. 135 *ἐκ τῆς Λυκουργείας ἐρέσθαι βούλομαι,* where the quotation which follows is from the Edoni, one of the

connexion with the preceding tragedies obscure; but it probably dealt with the fortunes of Menelaus, the brother of Agamemnon, and related the story of his detention on the coast of Egypt, and his rescue by the help of Proteus, the sea-god.

The subject of the trilogy is one of those dark stories of hereditary guilt, of which the Septem has already supplied an example. Atreus had sown the first seeds of woe by his murder of the children of Thyestes; and Agamemnon, later on, had sacrificed the life of his daughter Iphigeneia to his own ambition. The results are unfolded in the Oresteia. Clytaemnestra, assisted by her paramour Aegisthus, murders Agamemnon, partly to conceal her adultery, partly in revenge for the loss of her daughter. The murderers are slain in turn by Orestes, who thus incurs the guilt of matricide. For this offence he is exposed to the vengeance of the Furies, who typify the workings of remorse, and by whom he is hunted from place to place, until at length he reaches Athens, where he finds release from his sufferings.

The story is mentioned several times in Homer, but contains, as related by him, none of those subtler traits which appeared in later times, such as the mixture of motives in the case of Clytaemnestra, and the hesitation and remorse of Orestes. In Homer it is an ordinary tale of lust, murder, and laudable revenge[1]. At a subsequent date it was treated at length by Stesichorus in his Oresteia, and by Agias in his Nosti, one of the poems of the Epic Cycle[2]. Little, however, is known as to the form which the legend assumed in these two narratives,

tragedies of the Lycurgeia. (3) Though several hundred titles of Greek tragedies have been preserved, there is not a single example of a title formed on the analogy of Ὀρεστεία. (4) Possibly the form of the quotation was due to mere carelessness. By a somewhat similar confusion passages in one of the later plays of a tetralogy are occasionally quoted as though they occurred in the first. Thus Hesychius cites a word in the Choephori as from the Agamemnon (Hesych. v. γονίας), and Galen ascribes to the Προμηθεὺς Δεσμώτης some lines from the Λυόμενος (Frag. Aesch. 195 Nauck).

[1] Od. 1. 35 foll.; 3. 263 foll.; 4. 521 foll.; 11. 409 foll.

[2] The Νόστοι described the return of Agamemnon, and his murder by Clytaemnestra. The Ὀρεστεία, of which some fragments remain, dealt with the vengeance and remorse of Orestes.

except that in Stesichorus the idea of Orestes' remorse was now made prominent, and he was pursued by the avenging spirit of his mother[1]. Later on Pindar, in a passing reference, suggested that vengeance for the loss of Iphigeneia, and not mere lust, may have been the cause of Clytaemnestra's crime[2]. Nothing further of importance can be ascertained concerning the early history of the legend. At the same time these brief notices are sufficient to show that it had already been to a certain extent developed and expanded, and its meaning intensified, even before the time of Aeschylus.

But the depth of moral significance which it acquires in the hands of Aeschylus was essentially his own creation. Under his treatment it becomes one of the most solemn and impressive pictures of guilt and retribution which was ever painted by any poet. One thought inspires the whole trilogy from first to last—the thought of the crimes which have been committed in the past, and of the blood which has been shed, and which still cries out unceasingly for vengeance. This recollection seems to haunt the very souls of the actors in the successive tragedies. It hangs like a dark cloud over the minds of the Theban elders, damps their joy at the news of the victory, and fills them with gloomy forebodings. It forms the constant burden of those odes in the Choephori, where the chorus justify the approaching act of retribution. It is never absent from the lips of the Furies, as they pursue Orestes with righteous chastisement.

The Agamemnon has generally been regarded as the greatest of all Greek tragedies, though its structure is simple and unpretentious, and it possesses few of the qualities which constitute the attraction in a modern drama. The antique severity of the style is brought into prominent relief, if we compare it with the various imitations of modern authors[3]. In these latter works the interest centres mainly in the passions and the plot—in the struggles between love and honour which agitate the breast of Clytaemnestra, and in the sudden difficulties and

[1] Schol. Eur. Orest. 258. [2] Pyth. 11. 15 foll.
[3] E.g. Alfieri's Agamemnone.

counter-manœuvres which hinder the execution of the murder. In Aeschylus, on the other hand, there is no vacillation of motive, and the action, slight as it is, moves forward steadily and without hindrance to the inevitable conclusion. But the absence of all complexity in the conduct of the incidents is counterbalanced by the impressive solemnity of the tone, as the helpless victim draws closer and closer to his doom. Scene follows scene in an ascending scale of tragic intensity. The first note is struck by the guarded hints and allusions of the watchman. Then follow the reminiscences and apprehensions of the chorus, the dejected narratives of the herald, and the hollow and hypocritical greetings between Clytaemnestra and Agamemnon. In all these passages the sound of approaching calamity grows louder and louder, until at length it reaches its climax in the ravings of Cassandra, which foretell the commission of the murder.

The introduction of Cassandra, which gives occasion to the finest scene in the play, answers a double object. As an example of the insolence of Agamemnon, in bringing home his captive mistress before the very eyes of his wife, it lessens our sympathy with his misfortune, and fixes our attention on his guilt, in accordance with the moral purpose of the trilogy. At the same time the inspired utterances of the prophetess serve to recall to the minds of the audience those dark crimes of Atreus which were the primal source of the present evil. Another noticeable feature in the Agamemnon is the humorous scene which follows the murder. The sententious ineptitude of the old men, in the presence of the crisis, is one of those passages of semi-comedy with which Aeschylus occasionally relieves the tension of the feelings; and it may be compared with the speeches of the porter which precede the discovery of the murder in Macbeth, or with the bantering dialogue of the gentlemen after the death-scene in the Maid's Tragedy.

The Choephori contains the vengeance of Orestes, and the slaughter of Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra. The latter part of the play, in which the deed is accomplished, displays more ingenuity of contrivance in the management of the incidents

than is usual in Aeschylus; and the deception practised by the nurse upon Aegisthus is the earliest example in Greek tragedy of anything resembling a modern plot[1]. But the first half is almost devoid of action, and consists mainly of the long 'commus,' in which Orestes, Electra, and the chorus stand round the tomb of Agamemnon, appealing to him for aid, and recalling his mournful destiny. This episode, which appears far too lengthy for modern taste, has provoked much discussion, and the extent to which it is prolonged has been variously explained, either as denoting a certain hesitation on the part of Orestes, or as heightening the feelings of suspense and horror with which the coming doom is anticipated[2]. But we should remember that a scene of this kind, like many other duets between stage and chorus in Aeschylus, is more suitable for acting than for reading; and it is probable that the impressiveness of the spectacle in the theatre—the black-robed maidens beside the tomb, the weeping figures of Electra and Orestes, the varied gestures of anger, sorrow, and revenge, and the diverse tones of the music, rising and falling with the different emotions of the assembled group—would go far, during the actual performance, to prevent any feeling of monotony in the minds of the audience.

The older vase-paintings which depict the vengeance of Orestes represent him as stabbing Aegisthus in the breast, while Clytaemnestra is endeavouring to strike the assailant with an axe from behind. The same type of scene, though with slight varieties of detail, recurs so frequently, that there can be little doubt that it represents the ancient version of the legend, as given by Stesichorus and the Epic Cycle[3]. According to this account, Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra must have been slain together after a promiscuous struggle. Aeschylus has altered the circumstances of the slaughter. He still retains the axe, which figures so prominently in the old pictures, as the weapon of Clytaemnestra[4]. But he has caused Aegisthus to be slain first,

[1] Choeph. 734-782.

[2] Müller's Greek Literature, p. 332. Sidgwick's Choephori, p. xiv.

[3] Baumeister's Denkmäler, 2, pp. 1113-1115.

[4] Choeph. 889 δοίη τις ἀνδροκμῆτα πέλεκυν ὡς τάχος.

in order to introduce that impressive scene between mother and son, in which the horrors of matricide are powerfully portrayed, and the mind is prepared for the effects which are to follow.

These effects are exhibited in the Eumenides. Orestes, it is true, was justified, both by the commands of Apollo, and the Greek ideas of right, in killing the murderers of his father[1]. Yet the slaughter of a mother is a deed of such atrocity that it cannot pass unpunished, and he is pursued with relentless hatred by the Furies. He flies to Delphi, and is purified by Apollo. But the Furies still dog his steps till he arrives at Athens, where he is tried before the Areopagus[2]. The Furies accuse, Apollo defends, and the votes of the Areopagites are divided equally on both sides. Finally he is acquitted by the casting vote of Athene.

Throughout this play the interest is transferred from persons to principles. The human element becomes of less importance, and Orestes and his fortunes sink into the background. Their place is taken by the great gods of Olympus and of Tartarus, who represent opposing ordinances. Law and Justice, typified by the Furies, demand the punishment of the matricide; while Equity, personified by Apollo and Zeus, pleads for the release of the avenger of crime. It is between these mighty combatants that the battle is waged. Guilt is set against guilt, duty against duty, and no decision seems possible. At length Mercy, under the person of Athene, decides in favour of Orestes.

The end of the trial concludes the history of the house of Atreus, and would be the natural termination of the trilogy. But Aeschylus here turns aside from his main scheme, and inserts an episode of peculiar interest to his countrymen. The Furies, it is well known, were worshipped at Athens under

[1] See Müller's Dissertation on the Eumenides, p. 89 foll.

[2] In placing the trial of Orestes before the Areopagus Aeschylus follows the old tradition (Hellanicus, frag. 82). But he introduces a new feature by making the trial to be the cause of its first institution. This change enables him to explain his political views to the Athenians. Athene, in founding the Council, dwells in glowing language upon its future dignity and usefulness; and throughout her speech there is an obvious reference to the recent reforms of the democratic party. See above, p. 56.

a special title, as the Holy or Benign Ones, and were regarded by the Athenians not only as ministers of vengeance, but also as beneficent deities, who brought fertility to the earth[1]. Their sanctuary, and the grotto in which they were supposed to live, were situated at the foot of the Areopagus[2]. Aeschylus, by a bold invention of his own, connects their first settlement at Athens with the trial of Orestes. According to his version, when they hear the verdict of acquittal, they are consumed with fury, and abandon themselves to violent outbursts of passion. Disappointed of their prey, they threaten ruin and devastation to the land of the Athenians. But Athene addresses them with mild words of exhortation, and gradually assuages their wrath by recounting the honours they will receive if they take up their abode in Attica. At length their hearts are softened, their curses are turned into blessings, and they march forth in procession, escorted by troops of Athenian citizens, to their appointed home.

This closing scene is one of the finest conceptions in Aeschylus, whether regarded from the moral or from the theatrical point of view. The peaceful conversion of these mysterious goddesses of the underworld from Avenging Furies into Benign Goddesses typifies in the most beautiful manner the spiritual meaning of the play—the eventual supremacy of mercy over justice. At the same time the final procession cannot fail to have produced an extraordinary effect in the Athenian theatre. The situation of that theatre was such, that when the Furies moved slowly out of sight through the western

[1] Paus. 1. 28. 6 πλησίον δὲ ἱερὸν θεῶν ἐστὶν ἃς καλοῦσιν Ἀθηναῖοι Σεμνάς, Ἡσίοδος δὲ Ἐρινῦς. Soph. Oed. Col. 42 Εὐμενίδες, 90 σεμναὶ θεαί. They were also called Εὐμενίδες at Sicyon (Paus. 2. 11. 4). On their beneficent attributes see Eum. 916-967.

There can be little doubt that these Σεμναί or Εὐμενίδες had originally no connexion with the Ἐρινύες, or avengers of blood, but that they were benevolent agrarian goddesses, who made the earth fruitful and productive. See Miss Harrison's remarks in Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens, p. 558 foll. Their identification with the Ἐρινύες appears to have been due to the fact that both were goddesses of the underworld. When the identification took place is uncertain. Some people ascribe it to Aeschylus himself; but it is more likely to have been effected before his time.

[2] Paus. 1. 28. 6. Aesch. Eum. 805, 1007, 1036.

passage of the orchestra, they would appear to be actually wending their way towards their sanctuary under the Areopagus. Under such circumstances the illusion must have been complete, and the spectators might almost beguile themselves into the belief that they were transported into the remote past, and were witnessing with their own eyes the great events of mythical tradition.

The physical aspect of the Furies, as conceived by Aeschylus, and as represented in the performance of the Oresteia, was a further innovation on previous custom. Before his time there had been nothing loathsome in the mode in which they were depicted, whether in their character as avengers or as beneficent deities. Aeschylus exerted all his ingenuity to make them as horrible as possible, clothing them in long black garments, and giving them snaky locks and blood-smeared faces[1]. Tradition says that the spectacle was too terrible for many of the audience, and that boys fainted and women miscarried[2]. However this may be, it is certainly a fact that in subsequent works of Greek art there is no attempt to reproduce the Furies of Aeschylus. Later artists, when portraying these goddesses, represent them as beings of a mild, and sometimes beautiful, aspect[3].

§ 9. *Reputation among the Ancients.*

The admiration with which Aeschylus was regarded by his contemporaries has already been described in the beginning of the chapter, and is proved by his striking success in the dramatic competitions, and by the extraordinary honours which were paid to his memory[4]. For many years after his death his greatness continued to be undisputed, and his plays were constantly reproduced in the theatre. But in course of time, as

[1] Paus. I. 28. 6 πρῶτος δέ σφισιν Αἰσχύλος δράκοντας ἐποίησεν ὁμοῦ ταῖς ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ θριξὶν εἶναι· τοῖς δὲ ἀγάλμασιν οὔτε τούτοις ἔπεστιν οὐδὲν φοβερόν, οὔτε ὅσα ἄλλα κεῖται θεῶν τῶν ὑπογαίων.

[2] Vita Aesch. p. 4 Dindf. Pollux 4. 110.

[3] Baumeister, Denkmäler, I. p. 495.

[4] See above, pp. 49 & 59.

the century drew towards its close, the gradual transformation in the ideas and sentiments of the Athenians began to interfere with his popularity. A new generation arose, which found the passionate and rhetorical poetry of Euripides more congenial to its tastes. Though the older citizens still put their faith in Aeschylus, Euripides became pre-eminently the poet of the young. This divergence of opinion is vividly illustrated by that scene in the Clouds, where Strepsiades, after dinner, asks his son to recite a speech out of Aeschylus; and Phidippides, after horrifying his father by applying to Aeschylus such epithets as 'bombastic, ranting, and incoherent,' proceeds to declaim a love passage from Euripides[1].

Aristophanes naturally took the conservative side on this question. He recognised in Aeschylus a representative of the valour, honour, and simplicity of the old Athenians of Marathon and Salamis; while he regarded Euripides as a type of the loquacity and unprincipled dexterity of the new generation. Hence he loses no opportunity of exalting the former and depreciating the latter. His estimate of Euripides, it must be admitted, is manifestly unjust; but no critic, on the other hand, has ever shown a more genuine appreciation of all the nobler qualities of Aeschylus. While gently ridiculing his occasional obscurity and bombast, he seizes with instinctive insight upon the essential qualities of his poetry—its moral grandeur and loftiness of purpose. He feels, more especially, the magnificence and inspiration of his choral odes, calls him 'Bacchic king,' and confesses that he is far the greatest lyric poet that Greece has yet produced[2].

In the course of the fourth century the current of popular taste set decidedly in the new direction, and Aeschylus went still further out of fashion. It is true that he was still regarded, along with Sophocles and Euripides, as one of the three great tragic poets of Greece. His statue was erected in the theatre,

[1] Aristoph. Nub. 1364–1376.

[2] Aristoph. Ran. 1252–1259 *φροντίζειν γὰρ ἔγωγ' ἔχω | τίν' ἄρα μέμψιν ἐποίσει | ἀνδρὶ τῷ πολὺ πλεῖστα δὴ | καὶ κάλλιστα μέλη ποιήσαντι τῶν ἔτι νυνί. | θαυμάζω γὰρ ἔγωγ' ὅπῃ | μέμψεταί ποτε τοῦτον | τὸν βακχεῖον ἄνακτα.*

along with theirs, and laws were passed to ensure the preservation of his works in their integrity[1]. But his plays were seldom acted upon the stage; Sophocles and Euripides became the favourites with theatrical audiences[2]. They, too, were the poets whom every one was expected to read and to know, and it is their works which are quoted by the orators as authorities on questions of morals and religion[3]. In the case of Aeschylus, the length of his choral odes, and the simplicity of his plots, were distasteful to an age which had begun to regard the chorus as an excrescence, and which was accustomed to the more complex interests of the later drama.

Nothing shows more clearly the neglect into which Aeschylus had fallen than the indifference with which he is treated in the Poetics. Throughout this treatise the standards of dramatic writing are supplied by Sophocles and Euripides. When Aristotle is discussing the proper management of the chorus, he compares the practice of these two poets, but says nothing about Aeschylus[4]. When speaking of the delineation of character, he censures the realism of Euripides and praises the idealism of Sophocles, but leaves Aeschylus out of the comparison[5]. More remarkable still is the omission of any reference to the trilogic form of composition. In fact, the allusions to Aeschylus are few and unimportant[6]. His merit

[1] Plut. X Orat. p. 841 F.

[2] Allusions to reproductions of his plays are rarely to be met with after the fifth century. I have only been able to find a single instance, viz. Alciphron, Epist. 3. 48 *ὡς γὰρ ἐνίκα . . . τοὺς Αἰσχύλου Προπομπούς.*

[3] Dem. Fals. Leg. § 247. Aeschin. Timarch. § 151. Plut. X Orat. p. 849 A, where Satyrus, wishing to test the elocutionary powers of Demosthenes, asks him to repeat a speech 'out of Sophocles or Euripides.'

[4] Poet. c. 18.

[5] Ibid. cc. 3, 15, and 25.

[6] The direct references to Aeschylus in the Poetics are five in number. (1) c. 4 his introduction of a second actor, and diminution of the choral part, are mentioned. (2) c. 16 the recognition scene in the Choephori by means of a 'syllogism' is cited as an example of the second-best kind of recognition. (3) c. 18 he is praised for avoiding *τὸ πολύμυθον* in his treatment of the Niobe legend. (4) c. 18 his *Φορκίδες* and *Προμηθεύς* are censured as *τερατώδεις*. (5) c. 22 one of his verses is cited, to show how it was improved upon by Euripides.

In addition to these references it is probable that Aristotle had Aeschylus in his mind in two other passages, (1) c. 5 where he remarks that the early tragedies were unlimited in point of time. (2) c. 6 where he says that the

in introducing a second actor, and in expanding the dialogue, is fully recognised, but that is all. He seems to have been regarded by Aristotle as a poet of great historical importance in the development of tragedy, but as one who was now antiquated. Aristotle's attention was concentrated mainly on his analysis of plots, and his classification of recognitions, complications, and revolutions; and for such investigations there was little material to be found in Aeschylus.

During the later period of Greek civilisation Aeschylus never acquired the same popularity as his two rivals, though he still continued to be read by educated people[1]. Here and there, it is true, individual critics show a just estimate of his greatness. Some of the epigrams in the Anthology speak of him with enthusiasm[2]. Dion Chrysostomus, too, in his interesting comparison of the three tragic poets, though he gives the palm to Sophocles, evidently prefers Aeschylus to Euripides. He appreciates the splendour and loftiness of his conceptions, and his dignified picture of the heroic age; and as for the artless improbability of his plots, he considers this defect to be of little moment, since every drama must contain much that is impossible[3]. But the writer of the Life probably expresses the current opinion with more accuracy. While admitting that it was a sign of extraordinary greatness to have raised tragedy from the level it had reached under Phrynichus to the level which it attained in the hands of Aeschylus, he complains of the paucity of 'sententious maxims' and 'pathetic touches' in

older tragic poets were more excellent in diction and the delineation of character than in the construction of plots.

[1] Cp. the comparative scantiness of the quotations from his plays. The fragments of Aeschylus are far less in bulk than those of Sophocles or Euripides.

[2] E.g. Anthol. Pal. 7. 39 *ὁ τραγικὸν φώνημα καὶ ὀφρυόεσσαν ἀοιδὴν | πυργώσας στιβαρῇ πρῶτος ἐν εὐεπίῃ.* Ibid. 7. 411 *ὁ μὴ σμιλευτὰ χαράξας | γράμματα, χειμάρρῳ δ' οἷα καταρδόμενα . . . ὦ στόμα πάντων | δεξιόν, ἀρχαίων ἦσθά τις ἡμιθέων.*

[3] Dion Chrysostom Or. 52 *ἥ τε γὰρ τοῦ Αἰσχύλου μεγαλοφροσύνη καὶ τὸ ἀρχαῖον, ἔτι δὲ τὸ αὔθαδες τῆς διανοίας καὶ φράσεως, πρέποντα ἐφαίνετο τραγῳδίᾳ καὶ τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἤθεσι τῶν ἡρώων, οὐδὲν ἐπιβεβουλευμένον οὐδὲ στωμύλον οὐδὲ ταπεινόν . . . ὁ δ' Αἰσχύλος* (unlike Euripides) *ἁπλῶς εἰσήγαγε τὸν χορὸν* (in the Philoctetes), *ὃ τῷ παντὶ τραγικώτερον καὶ ἁπλούστερον . . . καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὲν ἐδύναντο πάσας διαφεύγειν τὰς ἀλογίας ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις, ἴσως ἂν εἶχε λόγον μηδὲ τοῦτο παραπέμψαι· νῦν δὲ πολλάκις ποιοῦσι κ.τ.λ.*

the dramas of the latter, criticises his style as 'rude and unpolished,' and considers his excellence to lie mainly in 'splendid detached passages,' and in the 'wonder and terror' which he excites[1]. Quintilian, in the same way, speaks of the 'roughness and inelegance' of his compositions, and regards him as altogether inferior to Sophocles and Euripides[2].

[1] Vita Aesch. pp. 4–7 (Dindf.) διὸ ἐκλογαὶ μὲν παρ' αὐτῷ τῇ κατασκευῇ διαφέρουσαι πάμπολλαι ἂν εὑρεθεῖεν, γνῶμαι δὲ ἢ συμπάθειαι ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν δυναμένων εἰς δάκρυα ἀγαγεῖν οὐ πάνυ. ταῖς τε γὰρ ὄψεσι καὶ τοῖς μύθοις πρὸς ἔκπληξιν τεραστώδη μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς ἀπάτην κέχρηται.

[2] Quint. Inst. 10. 1. 66 'rudis in plerisque et incompositus . . . longe clarius illustraverunt hoc opus Sophocles atque Euripides.'

CHAPTER III.

SOPHOCLES.

§ 1. *His Life.*

SOPHOCLES was born in the autumn of 497, twenty-eight years after Aeschylus[1]. His father Sophillus, though not of aristocratic descent, was a rich man, his wealth being derived from the ownership of slaves employed in various manufactures[2]. The deme to which the family belonged was Colonus, a village to the north-west of Athens, and about a mile distant from the city[3]. It was here that Sophocles passed his boyhood; and

[1] He died in 406–405, aged ninety-one (Marmor Par. ep. 64). As the Frogs was produced in January of 405, and was composed after the death of Sophocles, he must have died not later than the autumn of 406. Hence he cannot have been born later than the autumn of 497.

Diod. Sic. 13. 103 agrees with the Marble as to the date of his death, but puts his age at ninety, perhaps merely using round numbers for ninety-one. Suidas (v. Σοφοκλῆς) also puts his age at ninety, but gives an obviously incorrect date for his birth (488–487 B.C.).

The Vita Soph. (p. 2 Dindf.) says he was born in 495–494, but adds incorrectly that he was seventeen years younger than Aeschylus, and twenty-four years older than Euripides. Hence its authority is not of much value. It also says (p. 3) that he was elected general seven years before the Peloponnesian War, when sixty years old (other readings are sixty-five and sixty-nine). If we adopt the reading sixty, and count from the seventh year before the war (i.e. 437 B.C.), we may bring this statement of the Life into harmony with the Marble.

The assertion of Lucian (Macrob. c. 24) that he was ninety-five at the time of his death, and of Val. Max. (8. 7. 12) that he was nearly a hundred, are plainly exaggerations.

[2] Aristoxenus described him as τέκτων ἢ χαλκεύς, Istrus as μαχαιροποιός, the truth being, as the biographer conjectures, that he possessed slaves employed in these trades (Vit. Soph. p. 1). For the same reason the father of Demosthenes was called μαχαιροποιός, the father of Isocrates αὐλοποιός.

[3] Vit. Soph. p. 1. Suidas, v. Σοφοκλῆς.

the affection with which he always continued to regard his early home finds beautiful expression in the Oedipus Coloneus, the latest of his tragedies, in which he dwells with tender recollection upon the charms of that 'white Colonus,' where the nightingale ever sings in the green glades amid the ivy and the vine, where the narcissus and the golden crocus bloom, and where the sleepless fountains of Cephisus wander over the swelling bosom of the land[1].

He was educated with great care, according to the old Greek system, in which music, dancing, and gymnastic training played an important part. His instructor was Lamprus, a celebrated musician of the period, and a supporter of the antique and dignified style of music, as opposed to the more florid manner which was then being introduced[2]. In these various exercises Sophocles displayed his pre-eminence from the very first; and the beauty of his form and his skill in dancing and in music were so conspicuous, that when, after the defeat of the Persians, a chorus of boys was chosen to sing a paean round the trophy of victory, he was selected to lead the chorus, and to play the accompaniment on the harp[3].

Tradition says that he 'learnt tragedy from Aeschylus[4]'; but as there is no trace of any personal relationship between the two poets, it is probable that the phrase refers merely to that general influence which Aeschylus would naturally exert over his successors. Nothing further is known about the life of Sophocles till the occasion of his first appearance as a tragic poet in 468. He was then twenty-eight years of age, and

Corp. Ins. Att. 1. 237. Cic. Fin. 5. 3 'Coloneus ille locus cuius incola Sophocles.' Istrus said he was a native of Phlius (Vit. Soph.), a curious mistake, which some explain as due to a misunderstanding of a line in Dioscorides' epigram on Sophocles (Anthol. Pal. 7. 37 *ὅς με τὸν ἐκ Φλιοῦντος*); others suppose a copyist's error for Phlya, the Attic deme, where Sophocles' father may have had property.

[1] Oed. Col. 668-693.

[2] Vit. Soph. p. 1 *καλῶς τ' ἐπαιδεύθη καὶ ἐτράφη ἐν εὐπορίᾳ*. Ibid. p. 2 *διεπονήθη δ' ἐν παισὶ καὶ περὶ παλαίστραν καὶ μουσικήν, ἐξ ὧν ἀμφοτέρων ἐστεφανώθη . . . ἐδιδάχθη δὲ τὴν μουσικὴν παρὰ Λάμπρῳ*. Athen. p. 20 *ἦν καὶ ὀρχηστικὴν δεδιδαγμένος καὶ μουσικὴν παρὰ Λάμπρῳ*. For Lamprus cp. Plut. Mus. c. 31.

[3] Vit. Soph. p. 2. Athen. p. 20.

[4] Vit. Soph. p. 2 *παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ δὲ τὴν τραγῳδίαν ἔμαθε*.

Aeschylus, now in the height of his reputation, was one of his competitors. According to the usual story, the contest which ensued was a remarkable one. It is said that the excitement and partisanship among the audience reached such a pitch of violence, that Apsephion, the archon, instead of appointing the judges by lot in the usual manner, ordered the ten generals, one of whom was Cimon, to act as jury in their place, and that they awarded the prize to Sophocles[1]. As to the victory of Sophocles there is no doubt. But the circumstances by which it is said to have been attended are so full of inherent improbability, that it is difficult to regard them as anything but a fiction, invented by later biographers, in order to give point and significance to the first encounter between two great poets[2].

After his first victory in 468 the career of Sophocles as a tragic poet was one of continuous success. He retained his productive powers in full perfection long beyond the span usually allotted to mankind, and continued for about sixty years to write and produce tragedies in which no signs of failing genius could be detected[3]. Like Aeschylus he appears to have exhibited, on the average, every alternate year, and was generally first in the competitions, winning eighteen victories at the City Dionysia, besides several other victories at the less important Lenaea[4]. Even when he failed to obtain the first

[1] Plut. Cimon, c. 8. Marmor Par. ep. 56.

[2] The story is improbable for two reasons; (1) if this was the first appearance of Sophocles, why should there be this excitement and partisanship in the case of a new and unknown poet? (2) The City Dionysia being a great religious festival, of which the procedure was carefully regulated, it is questionable whether any archon would have ventured, on his own responsibility, to disregard established custom in this flagrant manner.

The *chronological* objections are not of much value, because (1) though Plutarch gives the story immediately after his account of Cimon's conquest of Scyrus, he does not imply that these events occurred in the same year, (2) the date of the conquest of Scyrus is quite uncertain.

[3] The Oedipus Coloneus, one of his greatest tragedies, was written shortly before his death. Argum. I. Oed. Col. Val. Max. 8. 7. 2.

[4] As he wrote over a hundred dramas, and would exhibit four at each City Dionysia, and probably three at each Lenaea (Attic Theatre, p. 38), he must have taken part in about thirty competitions in the course of his career. That he won eighteen victories at the City Dionysia is proved by a recently discovered inscription (Corp. Ins. Att. 977 a. Σοφοκλῆς ΔΓΗΙ), as well as by

prize, he was never placed lower than second in the list[1]. The most surprising of his defeats was that by Philocles, on the occasion of his production of the Oedipus Tyrannus[2]. But it is possible that in this contest Philocles was competing, not with his own tragedies, but with those of his uncle Aeschylus; and in this case the failure of Sophocles would be less inexplicable. The total number of his plays is given variously by the ancient authorities as 104, 123, and 130[3]. The first of these numbers, however, appears to be too small, since the titles of more than 110 dramas have been preserved even to the present day[4].

Few poets have lived through a more eventful period of history than Sophocles. His career coincided almost exactly with the rise, the maturity, and the downfall of the Athenian Empire. As a boy he was present at the rejoicings for the great victories of Salamis and Plataea, and witnessed the subsequent expansion of his country's power. His manhood was passed during that golden age of Attic history, the age of Pericles, in which Athens reached the summit of her glory and influence. Yet he lived long enough after this to behold the miserable collapse of the Sicilian expedition, and the wreck of Athenian aspirations; and his death occurred only a few months before the final catastrophe of Aegospotami.

In many of the events of this great period he took a personal

the testimony of Diod. Sic. 13. 103. The Life gives his victories as twenty, and Suidas (v. Σοφοκλῆς) as twenty-four: but these numbers probably include victories at the Lenaea. In addition to his success in 468 he is known to have won the first place in 438 (Argum. Eur. Alc.), and in 409 (Argum. Soph. Phil.), and to have been second in 431 (Argum. Eur. Med.).

[1] Vita Soph. p. 3 Dindf.

[2] Argum. Oed. Tyr. Aristid. 2, p. 334 Dindf.

[3] Vita Soph. p. 6 ἔχει δὲ δράματα, ὥς φησιν Ἀριστοφάνης, ἑκατὸν τέσσαρα (v. l. ἑκατὸν τριάκοντα), τούτων δὲ νενίθευται δεκάεπτα. Suidas (v. Σοφοκλῆς), ἐδίδαξε δὲ δράματα ρκγ' (i. e. 123), ὡς δέ τινες, καὶ πολλῷ πλείω. If in the Life we read τριάκοντα, and alter δεκάεπτα to ἑπτά, we get 123 confessedly genuine dramas, and can so bring the Life into harmony with Suidas. But the numbers, in cases of this kind, are of rather uncertain value.

[4] See Appendix II for the list of his plays. The number comes to about 115, but some of these are not quite certain, and others, such as Telephus and the Mysians, may have been double titles for the same play.

share, though at the same time, as his friend Ion of Chios confesses, he showed no particular aptitude for political life[1]. Yet he was twice elected general—the highest office which an Athenian could hold. The first occasion was in 440, when he was sent along with Pericles to suppress the revolt in Samos[2], and was laughingly rebuked by the latter for his apparent carelessness in the discharge of his duties[3]. At a later period he again served as general with Nicias, but though first in point of seniority, was content to occupy a subordinate position, remarking that, if he was oldest in years, Nicias was oldest in experience[4]. In addition to his military commands he was also appointed treasurer of the tribute in 436, and acted as ambassador on several occasions[5]. Possibly he may have held other offices of which no record has been preserved. But the supposition that he was the Sophocles who served on the Committee of Ten, and took part in the establishment of the Four Hundred, is more than doubtful[6].

In spite, however, of his connexion with public affairs, there is no trace of the statesman in the writings of Sophocles; and the serene idealism of his tragedy is never ruffled by the intrusion of contemporary politics. It would be impossible, in any of his extant dramas, to point to a single passage which can be regarded as a direct allusion to passing events. The maxims concerning government which he occasionally enunciates are of

[1] Athen. p. 603 (quoting from Ion's Ἐπιδημίαι), *τὰ μέντοι πολιτικὰ οὔτε σοφὸς οὔτε ῥητήριος ἦν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἂν τις εἷς τῶν χρηστῶν Ἀθηναίων.*

[2] Vita Soph. p. 3. Argum. Soph. Ant. Strabo 14, p. 638 C. Schol. Aristid. 3, p. 485 (Dindf.). Suidas, v. Μέλισσος. Athen. p. 603. Schol. Aristoph. Pax 696.

[3] Plut. Pericles, c. 8 *καὶ ποτὲ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους, ὅτε συστρατηγῶν ἐξέπλευσε μετ' αὐτοῦ, παῖδα καλὸν ἐπαινέσαντος, οὐ μόνον, ἔφη, τὰς χεῖρας, ὦ Σοφόκλεις, δεῖ καθαρὰς ἔχειν τὸν στρατηγόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ὄψεις.* So Val. Max. 4. 3. 1.

[4] Plut. Nicias, c. 15.

[5] Corp. Ins. Att. 1. 237 Σ]οφοκλ[ῆς] Κολω[νῆθεν Ἑλληνοταμίας ἦν]. Vita Soph. p. 1 *καὶ ἐν πολιτείᾳ καὶ ἐν πρεσβείαις ἐξητάζετο.*

[6] This Sophocles, who was one of the *πρόβουλοι* in 411, defended his conduct in establishing the Four Hundred by saying it was the best course under the circumstances (Aristot. Rhet. 3. 15). He was probably the same as the Sophocles who appeared in the law-courts as advocate of Euctemon (Aristot. Rhet. 1. 14), and who is mentioned by Xenophon as one of the Thirty Tyrants (Hell. 2. 3. 2).

the most general description. Hence it is vain to discuss the question of his political opinions, or to endeavour to ascertain whether he welcomed or regretted the great movements of the time, such as the growth of the democracy, and the imperial policy of Pericles. Even if he held decided views on these subjects, there are now no means of discovering them.

Besides the offices already mentioned, Sophocles also appears to have discharged certain priestly functions in connexion with the worship of Asclepius[1]; and the paean which he composed in honour of this deity was very famous in antiquity, and continued to be sung at Athens as late as the third century A.D.[2] He was also priest of Alcon, the Attic hero, and companion of Asclepius; and after his death a statue of Alcon was erected by one of his sons[3]. Whence it is a plausible conjecture that this worship of Alcon and Asclepius was an old hereditary cultus in the family.

The reverence with which he treated the traditional religion of the Greeks is proved, not only by the above facts, but also by the general tenor of his dramas; and the scholiast describes him as 'the most god-fearing of mankind[4].' Popular superstition loved to regard him as a special favourite of heaven, and to invest his life and character with a sort of religious glamour. He was supposed to have 'entertained' Asclepius in his own house—a supposition which may perhaps have arisen from some passage in the paean, in which with a poet's fancy he represented the god as appearing visibly before him. However this may be, after his death the Athenians worshipped him as a hero, under the title of 'the Entertainer,' and built a shrine in his honour, where they offered yearly sacrifices[5]. They also

[1] Marinus, vita Procli, c. 29 *οἰκίαν ... γείτονα μὲν οὖσαν τοῦ ἀπὸ Σοφοκλέους ἐπιφανοῦς Ἀσκληπιείου.*

[2] Philostrat. vit. Apoll. 3. 17 (p. 96 Kayser) *ὁ παιὰν ὁ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους, ὃν Ἀθήνησι τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ ᾄδουσιν.* Lucian, Encom. Demosth. c. 27.

[3] Vita Soph. p. 3 *ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ Ἀλκωνος ἱερωσύνην, ὃς ἥρως ἦν μετὰ Ἀσκληπιοῦ παρὰ Χείρωνι τραφείς, ἱδρυνθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἰοφῶντος τοῦ υἱοῦ μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν.* If *ἱδρυνθείς*, as some suggest, refers to Sophocles, it must denote a statue of Sophocles as priest of Alcon. But more probably it refers to Alcon himself.

[4] Schol. Soph. El. 831 *καὶ γὰρ εἷς ἦν τῶν θεοσσεβεστάτων.*

[5] Etym. Mag. v. *Δεξίων.* Plut Num. c. 4. Philostrat. Imag. 13. Vita Soph. p. 6.

ascribed to him the power of charming baneful winds into stillness[1], and told several stories of his close connexion with the gods. Thus when a golden crown had been stolen from the temple of Hercules, the place of its concealment was revealed to him in a vision[2]. And when he died, and the Athenians were unable to bury him in his ancestral tomb outside the city, because of the presence of the Spartan army, the god Dionysus appeared in person to Lysander, and charged him to give permission for the burial[3].

Sophocles was married to a wife named Nicostrata, by whom he became the father of Iophon[4]. Somewhat late in life he formed a connexion with a certain Theoris, a woman of Sicyon, by whom he had a son called Ariston[5]. Three other sons are mentioned by name, but nothing is known about them[6]. It is also said that in extreme old age he fell into the clutches of the courtesan Archippe[7], whom he made the heiress of his

[1] Philostrat. vit. Apoll. 8. 7 (p. 313 Kayser).

[2] Vita Soph. p. 4. Cic. de Divin. c. 25, who says it was a golden bowl that was stolen.

[3] Vita Soph. p. 5. Paus. 1. 21. 2. Unfortunately for the credit of this story Lysander was commanding the fleet when Sophocles died, and the blockade of Athens did not begin till the year after his death, i. e. in 405.

[4] Suidas, v. Ἰοφῶν.

[5] Id. l. c. Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 78. Athen. p. 592 ἤδη γέρων ὢν ἠράσθη Θεωρίδος τῆς ἑταίρας. This Ariston had a son called Sophocles, a celebrated tragic poet of the fourth century (Suidas v. Σοφοκλῆς. Argum. 2 Oed. Col. Vita Soph. p. 4).

The very existence of Theoris and Ariston has been called in question by certain critics on the ground that the younger Sophocles, the tragic poet, was the son of Iophon (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 672—report of the ταμίαι τῶν ἀλλῶν θεῶν for 376–375 B. C.—Σοφοκλῆς Ἰοφῶντος ἐκ Κολω[νοῦ ἀνέθηκε . . .] τόνδε κ.τ.λ.). But all that is proved by this inscription is that Iophon also had a son called Sophocles. There was nothing to prevent Ariston calling his own son by the same name. That the younger Sophocles who wrote the tragedies was son of Ariston and grandson of Theoris appears to be certain from the testimonies cited above. In the case of a highly successful poet (he won seven victories according to Suidas, and twelve according to Diod. Sic. 14. 53), whose name would often occur in the didascaliae, it is most improbable that all the authorities should have made the same mistake about his parentage.

One of the more ingenious of the ancient commentators detected a reference to Theoris in a tragic ode of Sophocles beginning φίλη γὰρ ἡ θεωρίς (Athen. p. 592). Here θεωρίς probably = βάκχη (Hesych. v. θεωρίδες). But the foolishness of this inference is no argument against the existence of Theoris.

[6] Their names were Leosthenes, Stephanus, and Menecleides (Suidas, v. Σοφοκλῆς). Their mother's name is not mentioned.

[7] Athen. p. 592. Smicrines, the former

property; but this statement, which depends on very dubious authority, is discredited by the fact that it was not permissible in law for an Athenian to disinherit his children.

No incident in the career of Sophocles is more widely celebrated than the charge supposed to have been brought against him in his old age by his son Iophon. It is said that Iophon was jealous of the favour which he showed towards his illegitimate offspring, and accused him of mental incapacity, in order to get the administration of his property taken out of his hands. Sophocles, to prove his sanity, proceeded to recite a portion of the Oedipus Coloneus, which he had recently composed. The jury, struck with admiration, acquitted him on the spot[1].

This story is so striking and picturesque, that every one would wish to believe in its authenticity. But the evidence against it is too strong to be resisted. In the first place there is a considerable discrepancy as to the nature of the charge. According to some accounts it was merely an informal complaint before the 'clansmen'; according to others it was a regular prosecution in the law courts[2]. Then again, the testimony of contemporary authors is inconsistent with the supposition that the last years of Sophocles were clouded by legal disputes with his son Iophon. Phrynichus, the comic poet, describes him as a 'fortunate man, who died happily, after encountering no evil'; and Aristophanes tells us that he continued, as long as he lived, to assist his son Iophon in the composition of his tragedies[3]. Moreover Iophon, in the inscription which he placed upon his father's tomb, mentioned as one of his greatest

lover of Archippe, on hearing of her connexion with the aged Sophocles, is said to have remarked, *ὥσπερ αἱ γλαῦκες ἐπὶ τάφων καθῆται.* The whole story comes from Hegesander, an anecdote-collector of the third century B.C., and probably originated in the common habit of applying current witticisms to individual cases.

[1] Vita Soph. p. 4. Plut. An Seni, &c. c. 3. Cic. de Senect. c. 7. Lucian, Macrob. c. 24.

[2] The Life says *πρὸς τοὺς φράτορας ἐγκαλοῦντα τῷ πατρί*: the other authorities describe it as an ordinary *παρανοίας δίκη.* There are also some further discrepancies in the different accounts. According to Plutarch only the lyric in praise of Athens was recited (Oed. Col. 668 foll.); the others say he 'read the Oedipus Coloneus.' Again, according to the Life, the charge was brought by Iophon; according to Plutarch and Cicero, by 'his sons.'

[3] Meineke, Frag. Com. Graec. 2. p. 592. Aristoph. Ran. 73–79.

achievements the fact that he had written the Oedipus Coloneus when he was nearly a hundred years old[1]. But if the story of the prosecution were true, he would hardly have gone out of his way, in writing his father's epitaph, to refer to that identical tragedy by which his charge had been refuted.

The whole narrative, therefore, is apparently devoid of foundation[2]. Some critics suggest that it was derived from a scene in an old comedy, in which Sophocles and his son were exhibited in contention[3]. Perhaps, however, the key to its origin may be found in that passage of the Life, which states that Sophocles, in one of his dramas, introduced Iophon accusing him of madness before the clansmen[4]. It is possible that this drama was the Oedipus Coloneus, and that the violent scene between Polyneices and Oedipus was taken by some ancient grammarian to represent the relationship between Sophocles and his own son, and so gave rise to the story about the trial. If this was the origin of the fiction, it would account for the manner in which the Oedipus Coloneus is invariably mixed up with it. At first sight the above explanation may appear far-fetched and improbable; but it is not inconsistent with the practice of the ancient biographers, as we shall see later on in the case of Euripides, the story of whose career has been diversified in more than one place by incidents derived from his own tragedies[5].

As the poet Phrynichus truly observed, Sophocles was one of the most fortunate of mankind, not only on account of his

[1] Val. Max. 8. 7. 2.

[2] The statement in Aristot. Rhet. 3. 15 has sometimes been cited in support of the story (*ἄλλος τρόπος ὡς ἐστὶν ἁμάρτημα ἢ ἀτύχημα ἢ ἀναγκαῖον, οἷον Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη τρέμειν, οὐχ ὡς ὁ διαβάλλων ἔφη, ἵνα δοκῇ γέρων, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης· οὐ γὰρ ἑκόντι εἶναι αὐτῷ ἔτη ὀγδοήκοντα*). Probably the Sophocles here meant is the tragic poet, since it is unlikely that two people of the same name should have lived to such a great age. But the reference can hardly be to the prosecution brought by Iophon. If Iophon had been charging his father with dotage, the very last accusation he would think of making would be to charge him with trying to appear older and more feeble than he really was.

[3] See Prof. Jebb's Introd. to Oed. Col. p. xli.

[4] Vita Soph. p. 4 *καί ποτε ἐν δράματι εἰσήγαγε τὸν Ἰοφῶντα αὐτῷ φθονοῦντα καὶ πρὸς τοὺς φράτορας ἐγκαλοῦντα τῷ πατρὶ ὡς ὑπὸ γήρως παραφρονοῦντι . . . καὶ τότε τὸν Οἰδίποδα παραγνῶναι.*

[5] See below, p. 211.

poetic fame, but also because of the serene prosperity of his life[1]. He is described as a man of tranquil and contented temperament; and the well-known story in Plato represents him as rejoicing in his old age at having escaped from the tyranny of sensual passions[2]. The same calmness of disposition rendered him averse to change, and he never left Athens, though frequently invited to do so by foreign princes[3]. The generosity of his mind, and his freedom from all petty feelings of jealousy, are exemplified in the Frogs, where he concedes the supremacy to Aeschylus without a murmur[4]. As to his relations with Euripides very little is known. Several anecdotes, mostly of a puerile nature, were retailed by later writers, implying the existence of a certain mean rivalry between the two poets[5]. But these stories possess no historical value; and the admiration which he felt for the genius of Euripides was manifested, after the latter's death, by his appearing in the theatre, along with his actors and chorus, in the garb of mourning[6].

Owing to the charm of his character he was universally

[1] *Μάκαρ Σοφοκλέης, ὃς πολὺν χρόνον βιοὺς | ἀπέθανεν, εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ καὶ δεξιός, | πολλὰς ποιήσας καὶ καλὰς τραγῳδίας· | καλῶς δ' ἐτελεύτησ' οὐδὲν ὑπομείνας κακόν* (Meineke, Frag. Com. Graec. 2, p. 592).

[2] Aristoph. Ran. 82 *ὁ δ' εὔκολος μὲν ἐνθάδ', εὔκολος δ' ἐκεῖ.* Plat. Rep. p. 329C *καὶ δὴ καὶ Σοφοκλεῖ ποτὲ τῷ ποιητῇ παραγενόμην ἐρωτωμένῳ ὑπό τινος, πῶς, ἔφη, ὦ Σοφόκλεις, ἔχεις πρὸς τἀφροδίσια; ἔτι οἷός τε εἶ γυναικὶ συγγίγνεσθαι; καὶ ὅς, εὐφήμει, ἔφη, ὦ ἄνθρωπε· ἀσμενέστατα μέντοι αὐτὸ ἀπέφυγον, ὥσπερ λυττῶντά τινα καὶ ἄγριον δεσπότην ἀποφυγών.* In regard to sensual pleasures Sophocles appears to have been much the same as the ordinary Greeks of his time. Cp. Plut. Pericles c. 10. Athen. pp. 582, 592, 598, 603, 604.

[3] Vita Soph. p. 3 Dindf. Cp. frag. 848 *οἴκοι μένειν δεῖ τὸν καλῶς εὐδαίμονα.*

[4] Aristoph. Ran. 786–790.

[5] Mutual accusations of plagiarism (Schol. Eur. Phoen. 1), witticisms on each other's love affairs (Athen. pp. 567 and 604, both from Hieronymus of Rhodes), sarcasms on each other's habits (Johan. Damascen. in Gaisford's Stob. Flor. 2, Append. p. 75).

That the two poets occasionally borrowed verses from one another is proved by the citations of Clemens Alex. (Strom. 6. 2), as well as by passages in the extant dramas (compare Soph. Trach. 1101–1104 with Eur. Herc. Fur. 1353–1357; Soph. Trach. 416 with Eur. Suppl. 567; Soph. Oed. Tyr. 1524 foll. with Eur. Phoen. 1758 foll.). But such imitations are a sign of friendship rather than of hostility. Philostratus of Alexandria wrote a book *περὶ τῆς τοῦ Σοφοκλέους κλοπῆς* (Euseb. Praecep. Ev. 10. p. 465 D).

[6] Vita Eur.

beloved[1]. In society, as Ion of Chios relates, he was always witty and agreeable; and the friendliness of his disposition caused him to found a sort of literary club at Athens[2]. An interesting picture of his manners in ordinary life has been preserved in an extract from the Memoirs of Ion. The passage contains an account of a banquet held in Chios, at which Sophocles was present; and describes, among other things, a literary discussion with a certain schoolmaster, who had objected to the propriety of the epithet 'purple,' as applied to cheeks; and whom Sophocles playfully refuted by quoting the analogy of phrases such as 'golden-haired' and 'rosy-fingered,' which would appear equally unsuitable if taken in too literal a sense[3].

Sophocles died in the autumn of 406, when more than ninety years of age[4]. All that is known concerning the manner of his death is the statement of his contemporary Phrynichus, that he was fortunate in death, as he had been fortunate in life[5].' The inventiveness of later ages produced various anecdotes on the subject. Some said he was choked by eating grapes sent him by the actor Callippides at the time of the Anthesteria; others said that, when reading the Antigone aloud, he killed himself by trying to deliver a long sentence without taking

[1] Vita Soph. p. 3 *καὶ ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν τοῦ ἤθους τοσαύτη γέγονε χάρις ὥστε πάντη καὶ πρὸς ἁπάντων αὐτὸν στέργεσθαι.*

[2] Athen. p. 604 *τοιαῦτα πολλὰ δεξιῶς ἔλεγέ τε καὶ ἔπρησσεν, ὅτε πίνοι ἢ πράσσοι.* Vita Soph. p. 3 *ταῖς δὲ Μούσαις θίασον ἐκ τῶν πεπαιδευμένων συναγαγεῖν.* Possibly he numbered among his friends the historian Herodotus, who is known to have visited Athens (Herod. 5. 77). At any rate he copies Herodotus in at least three places (Antig. 905–911, Oed. Col. 337–341, frag. 432). There is nothing, however, to show that the verses of Sophocles beginning *Ὠιδὴν Ἡροδότῳ τεῦξεν Σοφοκλῆς ἐτέων ὢν | πέντ' ἐπὶ πεντήκοντα* (Plut. An Seni, c. 3) were addressed to the historian.

The suggestion that Sophocles made the acquaintance of Herodotus at Samos, while general in 440, will not bear examination. Herodotus is said to have retired to Samos on the accession of the tyrant Lygdamis to power in Halicarnassus, but to have returned before his fall (Suidas, v. *Ἡρόδοτος*). As Halicarnassus was joined to the Athenian confederacy in 454 (Corp. Ins. Att. 1, 96), his sojourn in Samos must have been before that date.

[3] Athen. p. 603 foll.

[4] Marmor Par. ep. 64. Arg. 3, Oed. Col. Diod. Sic. 13. 103. See above, p. 126, note 1.

[5] *καλῶς δ' ἐτελεύτησ' οὐδὲν ὑπομείνας κακόν*, Meineke, Frag. Com. Graec. 2, p. 592.

FIG. 5. SOPHOCLES

breath; others again ascribed his death to excessive joy at the success of his Antigone in the competition[1]. But these stories hardly need refutation. He was buried, as already stated, in the family tomb on the way to Deceleia, about a mile from Athens, and over his tomb the figure of a siren was erected[2].

Two portraits of Sophocles are known to have existed in ancient times—the painting in the Stoa, in which he was represented as playing the harp, and which was probably the work of the fifth century; and the bronze statue erected in the theatre towards the close of the fourth[3]. In modern times several busts have been discovered, and also a splendid marble statue (fig. 5), now in the Lateran Museum[4]. The statue is said by experts to exhibit the characteristics of the age of Alexander the Great, and may possibly be an original work of that period, or may be copied from the bronze likeness in the theatre. It is a magnificent work of art, and though somewhat idealised, after the fashion of the time, probably represents the features of the poet with general fidelity[5]. The beauty of the face and figure, the graceful dignity of the posture, and the serene yet masterful character of the expression, correspond exactly with what we should expect to find in a likeness of Sophocles[6].

§ 2. *Improvements in Tragedy.*

The rise of Sophocles brings us to the third great epoch in the development of Greek tragedy. Nearly a hundred years had passed since the first hints and suggestions of a drama had

[1] Vita Soph. p. 5 Dindf. On these stories it is sufficient to remark that no grapes would be obtainable in February, the time of the Anthesteria; and that the Antigone was one of his earlier productions.

[2] Ibid. p. 5.

[3] Ibid. p. 2. Plut. X Orat. p. 841 F.

[4] Baumeister's Denkmäler, 3. p. 1685.

[5] Cp. Aristot. Poet. c. 15 *δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς εἰκονογράφους· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι ἀποδιδόντες τὴν ἰδίαν μορφὴν ὁμοίους ποιοῦντες καλλίους γράφουσιν.*

[6] As regards his personal beauty cp. the story that he was chosen on this account to lead the paean in honour of Salamis (Athen. p. 20). Cp. also the inscription on his tomb (Vita Soph. p. 6) *κρύπτω τῷδε τάφῳ Σοφοκλῆ πρωτεῖα λαβόντα | τῇ τραγικῇ τέχνῃ, σχῆμα τὸ σεμνότατον.*

been thrown out by Thespis. In more recent times the broad outline had been designed on a scale of daring magnificence by Aeschylus. It was reserved for Sophocles to bring to perfection the labours of his predecessors, and by expanding what was defective, and pruning what was luxuriant, to harmonise the different parts into a complete and artistic whole. His greatness consisted, not so much in the discovery of new forms, as in the development of the old; and in pure creative power he may perhaps seem inferior to Aeschylus. But though his various improvements, if regarded individually, were less radical and drastic in kind, yet their cumulative effect was such as to give a new character to tragedy; and if any of his extant dramas are compared with plays such as the Persae and the Septem, which were produced before his influence had begun to be felt, the contrast is so striking that they almost seem to belong to a different species of composition.

As regards the form of tragedy, the principal novelty introduced by Sophocles was the addition of a third actor[1]. This innovation completed the process which had been begun by Aeschylus, and finally put an end to the long contest for supremacy between the actors and the chorus. Even in Aeschylus the importance of the choral part had been greatly diminished. As long, however, as there were only two actors, it was impossible that both of them should be always present upon the stage simultaneously; and the chorus was still compelled to take a considerable share in the carrying on of the dialogue. But by the introduction of a third actor this difficulty was removed, and the dramatist was enabled for the first time to confine the dialogue more exclusively to the stage. As a consequence, the chorus lost more and more of its significance; the old conversations between actor and chorus tended to disappear, and the choral odes were treated as so many resting-places in the progress of the action. On the other hand, the dialogue, or the dramatic element in the play, was not only extended in size, but its interest was intensified by

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 4. Diog. Laert. 3. 56. Suidas, v. Σοφοκλῆς. Vita Soph. p. 2.

greater complexity in the incidents, and by a more varied play of character; and the attention of the audience was henceforth absorbed by the events upon the stage.

The numerous opportunities for dramatic effect, which were afforded by the employment of a third actor, and by the consequent increase in the number of the characters, may be clearly seen in the existing plays of Sophocles. Aeschylus, it is true, had already adopted the innovation in his latest tragedies, but hardly used it to the full extent of its possibilities. Sophocles was the first to perceive the powerful results which might be obtained by the employment of three actors simultaneously. One or two examples will illustrate this point. If we compare the scene in the Choephori, where the news of the supposed death of Orestes is brought to Clytaemnestra, with the similar scene in the Electra, the difference is at once apparent. In the Choephori, the sole persons present are Clytaemnestra and the bringer of the message; and the dialogue which ensues, though impressive from its very simplicity, is of one uniform tone throughout [1]. In the Electra, on the other hand, when the messenger arrives, both Electra and Clytaemnestra are standing before the palace gates, and the varied emotions with which they receive the tidings, and the contrast between the abject despair of Electra, and the transient remorse and subsequent exultation of Clytaemnestra, produce one of the finest effects in the play [2].

Another scene of the same kind, and one of even greater power, is to be found in the Oedipus Tyrannus. Oedipus and his wife Jocasta are listening to the story of the messenger from Corinth. Oedipus, hearing for the first time of his exposure on Cithaeron, is filled with joyful anticipations at the prospect of finding his parents. In the meantime, as the tale proceeds, Jocasta, who is standing by his side, gradually realises the appalling truth that Oedipus is her son. A more thrilling situation it would be impossible to conceive. Each fresh answer of the messenger, while it kindles the delusive hopes of Oedipus,

[1] Aesch. Choeph. 668 foll. [2] Soph. El. 660 foll.

plunges Jocasta into a deeper abyss of agony; until at length, after a fruitless appeal to her husband, she rushes from the stage in desperation[1].

Another important change, also due to Sophocles, was the abandonment of the trilogic system of composition[2]. Sophocles, like the other poets, when competing at the City Dionysia, was bound by custom to exhibit four plays in succession[3]. But instead of combining them into a single whole, he preferred to treat them as separate works of art[4]. One reason for the change may have been connected with the innovations already described. An average play of Sophocles, with its extended dialogue and elaborated plot, was far longer and more full of incident than an average play of Aeschylus; and it may have been felt that a trilogy composed of dramas of this type would be too vast and unwieldy an undertaking, and would stretch the capacity of the legends beyond their natural limits. Another motive may have been difference of religious sentiment. The principal purpose of the Aeschylean trilogy was to exemplify,

[1] Soph. Oed. Tyr. 984 foll.

[2] Suidas (v. Σοφοκλῆς), καὶ αὐτὸς ἦρξε τοῦ δρᾶμα πρὸς δρᾶμα ἀγωνίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ μὴ τετραλογίαν (MSS. στρατολογεῖσθαι or στρατολογίαν). The original authority from which Suidas is transcribing apparently meant that Sophocles, while exhibiting four plays at each festival like his rivals, ceased to compose tetralogies, i.e. ceased to combine the groups of plays into a single whole. But Suidas may possibly have misunderstood his meaning, and supposed that Sophocles introduced the practice of competing with single plays. His language (δρᾶμα πρὸς δρᾶμα ἀγωνίζεσθαι) rather supports this view.

Such confusions are not uncommon in Suidas, and may occasionally be detected, when his original sources of information happen to be preserved. Cp. the passage in Diog. Laert. 4. 20, where it is said that Polemon the philosopher was a great admirer of Sophocles, and especially in those parts where, according to Phrynichus, he was 'not sweet or diluted wine, but Pramnian.' From this source Suidas (v. ὑπόχυτος οἶνος) derives his absurd statement that Polemon himself was οὐ γλύξις οὐδ' ὑπόχυτος ἀλλὰ Πράμνιος.

[3] That Aeschylus and Euripides exhibited groups of four plays at the City Dionysia is proved by several didascaliae (see Attic Theatre, p. 16 foll.). No similar record has been preserved in the case of Sophocles. But it is obvious that he must have produced the same number of plays as his rivals. That this was the invariable custom is demonstrated by the evidence of innumerable inscriptions concerning dramatic contests.

[4] There is no trace of a trilogy to be found in any of the extant plays and fragments of Sophocles. The Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus Coloneus, and Antigone were composed at different times, and are quite independent of one another.

in successive dramas, the transmission of hereditary guilt; but as this doctrine was brought into far less prominence by Sophocles, a special form was no longer needed to enforce it.

The chief cause, however, which induced him to discard the trilogy, was in all probability the desire for simplicity and completeness of form. His artistic feeling rejected the notion of a drama which depended for its proper understanding upon something which preceded or came after. At the same time it is perhaps a matter for regret that he should have abandoned the old form altogether. The trilogy might have been employed by Sophocles, at any rate occasionally, in a manner which, though different from that of Aeschylus, would have been no less effective. To a poet who possessed so deep an insight into human nature, it might have afforded, with its extended range of time, a splendid opportunity for delineating the gradual development of character. But these and other possible advantages were sacrificed for the sake of artistic unity and perfection.

While the form of the drama was being modified in these various ways, a transformation of even greater importance was effected in its inner spirit and significance. Stated in general terms, the aim of Sophocles was to humanise tragedy, and to bring it down to a more earthly level from the supernatural region in which it had previously moved, without at the same time impairing its ideal splendour. This purpose he has accomplished with perfect skill, and its effect is everywhere visible in the changed tone which pervades his dramas. The sublime and awe-inspiring grandeur of Aeschylus is replaced by a certain indefinable grace and beauty. The great problems of religion and morals no longer overshadow the human interest of the story. Not that they are lost sight of altogether; but instead of that predominance which Aeschylus had given them, they form rather, in Sophocles, the background of the picture, against which the human figures stand out in sharp and conspicuous outline. The nature of man, and his various passions and struggles, become for the first time the main object of attention in the tragic drama. The characters are transformed in

a corresponding fashion. They resemble the heroic figures of Homer, rather than the rugged and Titanic beings whom Aeschylus loved to paint. While retaining the grace and strength of the old race of heroes, they come nearer to human beings in their emotions and weaknesses. Their language, too, is changed; it is no longer the grand and superhuman diction of Aeschylean tragedy, but a form of speech in which strength and beauty, simplicity and elevation, are skilfully combined.

Such then was the general character of the alterations introduced by Sophocles. Many other novelties of minor significance, concerning merely the production and external appearance of tragedy, were also ascribed to him. Owing to the deficiency of his voice, he was unable to follow the practice of the older poets, and to act the leading part in his own plays; and though sometimes appearing in a subordinate capacity, as a dancer or a harpist, he never came forward as a regular actor[1]. But he continued, like the other dramatists of the fifth century, to be his own stage-manager, and doubtless helped to regulate the outward character of Greek tragedy, following on the lines laid down by Aeschylus. He appears to have been mainly instrumental in the development of painted scenery, if he was not its actual inventor[2]. He raised the number of the chorus from twelve to fifteen—a change of which the exact significance is not explained, but which must have led to certain modifications in the style of the dancing[3]. He was also the first to employ Phrygian music in tragedy, and to introduce the bent staff which was carried by the more dignified characters, and the white shoe which was occasionally worn by actors and chorus[4]. These various innovations, though not of much importance in themselves, are at any rate a proof of the interest which he took in the external features of the drama.

[1] Vita Soph. p. 2. He took part in a ball-playing scene in the Nausicaa, and played the harp in the Thamyras (Athen. p. 20. Eustath. Od. p. 1553).

[2] See the Attic Theatre, p. 170.

[3] Vita Soph. p. 2 Dindf.

[4] Ibid. pp. 2 & 8.

§ 3. *Selection and Treatment of Plots.*

In choosing subjects for representation upon the stage Sophocles made no attempt to imitate the historical experiments of his predecessors, but kept strictly within the limits of mythical tradition. The themes which he found most congenial to his taste were those supplied by the old epic poems, and no less than fifty-three of his plays are taken from the Theban or from the Trojan Cycle[1]. In his preference for this special branch of mythology he follows the example of Aeschylus, from whom, however, he frequently diverges in his other tragedies. Thus he neglects almost entirely the varied series of Dionysiac myths, the original fountain of the tragic drama, which had provided Aeschylus with several of his best plays. On the other hand he opens out many original sources of his own. He takes peculiar pleasure in celebrating the legends of his native country, which Aeschylus had passed over, such as the stories of Theseus and Phaedra, of Ion, Tereus, and Procris. He also draws far more copiously from the rich stream of Argive and Argonautic mythology; and the adventures of Perseus, the sufferings of Tyro, the cruelty and punishment of Phineus, and the murderous feud between Atreus and Thyestes, supply him with various new materials[2].

On comparing his selection of subjects from a general point of view with that of Aeschylus, the main difference will be found to consist in his avoidance of the supernatural, and in his preference for the more purely human. In accordance with the changed tone of his tragedy he rejects those primitive and mysterious legends, in which the gods were the chief agents, and in which the genius of Aeschylus delighted. A few of his plays, it is true, such as the Niobe, the Thamyras, and the Triptolemus, deal with this type of myth; but these were probably youthful productions, written under the influence of the older poet[3].

[1] Cp. Athen. p. 277 ἔχαιρε δ' ὁ Σοφοκλῆς τῷ ἐπικῷ κύκλῳ.

[2] See the list of Sophoclean plays in Appendix II.

[3] The elder Pliny (N. H. 18. 7) says the Triptolemus was produced about

To consider next the structural arrangement of the plots. In the case of Sophocles it is no longer possible, owing to the absence of materials, to trace the gradual development of his dramatic style. The seven extant tragedies all belong to the period of his maturity, are constructed on much the same lines, and exhibit his art in its full perfection. But it is probable that he began his theatrical career by imitating the simple plots of Aeschylus, just as he imitated his language and his choice of subjects[1]. Hence if any of his youthful plays had been preserved, they would most likely have been found to display the usual characteristics of the Aeschylean drama—paucity of action and incident, and abundance of narrative and exposition. Some traces of this early manner may perhaps be detected in the fragments of the lost plays. In the Lemnians, for example, he is said to have given a description of all the Argonautic heroes, following the precedent of Aeschylus in the Cabiri[2]. In the Triptolemus, again, one of the scenes appears to have borne a considerable resemblance to the Prometheus Vinctus of Aeschylus. Demeter, in the course of the play, sends forth her son Triptolemus to distribute the gifts of corn among mankind, and before he sets out, informs him in a long narrative of the various countries he must traverse, and of the adventures he must encounter. Her speech, of which many fragments have been preserved, recalls, in style and copiousness, the account of the wanderings of Io in the Prometheus; and it is a significant fact that the phrase with which Demeter prefaces her description—'engrave my words on the tablet of thy mind'—is the identical phrase used by Prometheus in his address to Io[3].

But whatever may have been the character of the early works

145 years before the death of Alexander, i. e. in 468 B. C. Even if this date is not exactly correct, at any rate it is fairly certain that the Triptolemus was an early play. That the Thamyras was among the earlier dramas is rendered probable by the fact that Sophocles played the harp in it (Athen. p. 20).

[1] On his imitation of the language of Aeschylus, at the commencement of his career, see his own remarks in Plut. Prof. Virt. c. 7.

[2] Schol. Pind. Pyth. 4. 303.

[3] Frag. 540 θὲς δ' ἐν φρενὸς δέλτοισι τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους. Cp. frags. 541 and 547, with Nauck's comments.

of Sophocles, when we come to his later tragedies, the advance in point of structure is very noticeable. His plots, as there developed, hold a position intermediate between the simplicity of Aeschylus, and the intricacy and complexity of the moderns. The action, compared with that in Aeschylus, is richer and more varied. The legends are expanded and developed by the addition of numerous details, and while the general outline remains intact, the picture is filled in with a brilliant series of fresh incidents and unexpected turns, such as we find in a modern tragedy. But there is this important difference. In modern dramas one of the main sources of interest is the feeling of curiosity as to the ultimate issue of the plot. The aim of the dramatist is to stimulate this feeling, and to keep the audience on the alert, by concealing the issue as long as possible, and by holding out the prospect of various alternative solutions. Sophocles makes no attempt to excite an interest of this kind. He leaves us in very little doubt as to what the conclusion will be, or as to the manner in which it will be reached. He prefers to take the audience into his confidence from the very first, and to inform them of the general course of events, so that they may concentrate their attention on the development of character and on the ethical significance of the action. His main concern is to bring into the clearest light the passions of the human beings whose fate he is relating, and the pathos of the situation in which they are placed. His plots are constructed from this point of view. The novel incidents and sudden reverses with which he diversifies the action are introduced, not to puzzle the spectators, but to draw forth every variety of emotion from his characters, and to exhibit them in the most diverse positions.

This difference of method will be more clearly understood if we cite a few examples. Fortunately it so happens that among the surviving plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles there are two which deal with the same legend—the return of Orestes and his vengeance on Clytaemnestra; and the subject has also been dramatised in modern times by Alfieri and by Voltaire. A comparison of these four tragedies—the Choephori of

Aeschylus, the Electra of Sophocles, and the Orestes of Alfieri and of Voltaire—will illustrate the character of the Sophoclean plot, and the points in which it differs from that of Aeschylus on the one hand, and that of modern tragedy on the other.

The plot of the Choephori is as follows. Orestes first returns to Argos, and makes himself known to Electra and her maiden companions. Then for nearly half the play there is no fresh incident, beyond the mutual exhortations of brother and sister. Then Orestes withdraws, and after returning in the disguise of a Phocian stranger, beguiles Clytaemnestra with a false story about his own death, and is received into the palace. Meanwhile the nurse is sent to fetch Aegisthus, who is absent. Aegisthus arrives, enters the palace, and is slain by Orestes. Clytaemnestra comes rushing out, followed by her son, and a brief dialogue ensues. She is then led away to death; and shortly afterwards the palace doors are thrown open, and Orestes is seen standing beside the dead bodies of his mother and Aegisthus.

This simple story has been enriched by Sophocles with a multitude of fresh incidents and situations, which throw a varied light upon the character of the leading agents. Two new personages are introduced—the old retainer, whose recognition gives occasion to a touching little scene, in which the more affectionate side of Electra's nature is beautifully portrayed; and Chrysothemis, whose timidity serves as a perpetual foil to her sister's heroic courage. Again, the simple device by which, in the Choephori, Orestes gains admittance to the palace, is expanded by Sophocles into three scenes of great brilliance and power. First there is the story of Orestes' death, which, while it fills Clytaemnestra with triumph, plunges Electra into despair. Then Chrysothemis, radiant with delight, unfolds her new hopes to her sister, only to find that they are groundless. Finally Orestes enters, disguised as a stranger, and delivers the funeral urn to Electra, who abandons herself to an agony of grief, but whose sorrow is suddenly turned to joy, when her brother, smitten with compassion, at length reveals his identity. A further addition made by Sophocles is the

controversy between mother and daughter, in which Electra's fiery impetuosity finds a vent. By such devices the uniform sombreness of the older tragedy is converted into a varied picture of human life, in which conflicting passions and emotions succeed one another in rapid alternation. But there is no uncertainty as to the end. So far is Sophocles from desiring to mystify his audience, that he takes special care in the opening scene to prepare them for that which is to follow, and inserts, in the conversation between Orestes and the retainer, a succinct statement of the future course of events.

When we turn to the tragedies of Alfieri and Voltaire, the case is very different. Here the result remains in doubt to the very last, and the curiosity of the audience grows stronger and stronger as the action advances. Orestes, as in the old Greek dramas, gains a footing in Argos by means of a false story concerning his own death. But Aegisthus soon begins to conceive doubts as to the truth of the story; and the greater part of the two plays is taken up with the manœuvres, counter-manœuvres, suspicions, and intrigues of Aegisthus, Orestes, and their respective adherents. Then again, the attitude of Clytaemnestra imparts a further element of uncertainty. Both in Voltaire and in Alfieri she soon ascertains the truth about Orestes; and her mind is torn with conflicting emotions—affection for her son, love for Aegisthus, remorse for her crime, and fear for her husband's safety. It is impossible to say what course she will take; and it is hard to believe that Orestes, seeing her half-penitent condition, will venture to exact full vengeance for her ancient guilt. All these circumstances keep the spectator in suspense until the fifth act, when affairs reach a crisis. Aegisthus finally discovers the truth, and Orestes is led off to execution by the guards. All now seems over, and it appears as though a novel turn was to be given to the old legend. Suddenly, however, everything comes right again. The citizens of Argos break out into rebellion and rescue Orestes, who rushes back to the palace and slays Aegisthus. Clytaemnestra, in trying to protect her husband, is unwittingly killed by her son, who

thus escapes the guilt of intentional matricide, while acting in accordance with legendary tradition.

These two plays have no claim to be included among the best productions of the modern drama. In many respects their workmanship is crude; and the sudden revolt and accidental slaughter with which they terminate are clumsy devices, little superior to the 'deus ex machina' of the ancients. Their interest lies rather in the contrast they afford with the play of Sophocles. In the Greek tragedy the plot is entirely subordinate to the display of character and passion; the spectator is undistracted by fears about the issue. In the modern versions he is uncertain from the beginning whether Orestes will accomplish his purpose, or perish in the attempt; and his doubts are not resolved till the very end of the play.

We have seen, in the course of the preceding description, that the point which distinguishes the plots of Sophocles from those of Aeschylus is the greater richness and variety of the contents. But this use of more abundant materials is not accompanied by any loss of simplicity in the general design. On the contrary, the plays of Sophocles are remarkable, even among Greek tragedies, for singleness of purpose, and for the artistic unity of the structure. The various component elements are arranged and adjusted in such a manner, as to converge harmoniously in the same direction, and to concentrate the attention of the audience from first to last upon a single object. The action revolves round one great central figure, and one great moral principle, to which everything else is subordinated. The lesser characters are only so far developed as to throw the leading personage into greater prominence; and no side issues are allowed to obscure and overshadow the ruling motive of the play. Take, for example, the tragedy which we have just been considering, the Electra. The variety of the details has already been pointed out; but the unity of the main design is no less conspicuous. The action is inspired by one sole purpose—the execution of righteous vengeance upon Aegisthus and Clytaemnestra. One figure, that of Electra, engrosses the attention, and all else is made subservient to the delineation of

her character. The other personages come and go: she alone occupies the stage throughout; and the various passions of her nature—scorn, anger, despair, love, devotion—are called forth in succession by the changing circumstances of the drama. Such is the general character of the Sophoclean tragedy; and although, in one or two plays, such as the Trachiniae and the Philoctetes, this quality is less prominent, and our sympathies are more widely diffused, yet in all those dramas which are generally regarded as the most perfect specimens of his art, the concentration of the interest is the most conspicuous feature. If attempted by an inferior poet it might lead to coldness and monotony; but in Sophocles it leaves an impression of unapproachable grandeur, like the effect produced by some masterpiece of antique sculpture.

The plausibility and verisimilitude of the Sophoclean plots are no less worthy of admiration. The various scenes and incidents are linked together with an ease and smoothness and apparent facility which are apt to deceive the reader, and to cause him to overlook the art and skill displayed in the construction. The course of events is always natural and straightforward, and nothing occurs without adequate reason. Special care is taken to account for the entrances and exits of the characters, and there are none of those motiveless arrivals and departures which give an air of unreality to so many stage performances. Forced and violent situations, in which probability is sacrificed to dramatic effect, are also rigorously avoided. The termination, too, as a rule, is the obvious and inevitable result of the preceding incidents; and it is only in the Philoctetes that affairs have been allowed to fall into such a state of entanglement that divine intervention becomes necessary.

This accuracy of detail is not, however, pursued with pedantic exaggeration by Sophocles; his scrupulosity is confined to those events which take place in the presence of the spectators. As for the incidents which precede the commencement of the drama, he allows himself considerable latitude, and accepts the extravagances of the old legends with frank acquiescence. The story of Oedipus, for example, if examined by the light of

reason, is a clear impossibility. Sophocles makes no attempt to remove the difficulty; he takes the fable as it stands. But when the action once begins, the succession of incidents is manipulated with so much plausibility, that few spectators would ever bethink themselves of the antecedent improbabilities. In this respect he shows greater discrimination than modern imitators, such as Dryden and Voltaire, who endeavour to explain and rationalise the whole myth, but whose efforts only serve to call the reader's attention to difficulties which he might have otherwise overlooked.

Further than this, even in the course of the action Sophocles claims for himself equal freedom as regards events which are transacted at a distance from the stage, and are only made known to the audience by description. In the Trachiniae he represents a journey of two days as being performed in as many hours; and in the Antigone he makes Creon, contrary to all probability, finish the burial of Polyneices before he hastens to the rescue of the heroine. Such violations of strict accuracy, being removed from the actual sight of the spectators, were justly regarded by him as of minor consequence.

It has already been pointed out that the addition of a third actor naturally led to greater liveliness and vivacity in the dialogue; and that the lengthy half-epic narratives, which abound in Aeschylus, became comparatively infrequent. But the descriptive element was never entirely eliminated, either by Sophocles or by the later Greek tragedy, owing to its popularity with Greek audiences. It begins, however, in Sophocles to acquire a settled character, and to be confined to the formal speeches of the messenger, in which the catastrophe is reported at length. Set orations of this kind are to be found in four of his plays—the Oedipus Rex, Oedipus Coloneus, Antigone, and Trachiniae. In the other three, where their introduction was impossible owing to the nature of the plot, their place is taken by casual narratives in the old style[1]. The delight with which such speeches were received in the theatre may be illus-

[1] Aj. 284-330, 748-783. Phil. 260-316, 343-390, 603-621. El. 680-763.

trated by the example of the Electra—a play in which there is no real necessity for a descriptive oration. But Sophocles apparently felt that it was necessary to provide one, and found his opportunity in the fictitious death of Orestes, the announcement of whose fate is expanded into a minute and detailed story, which far exceeds the dramatic requirements of the situation[1].

The critics generally observe that in the plays of Sophocles there is less spectacular effect than in the plays of Aeschylus; and the statement as a whole is no doubt correct. Sophocles appeals more frequently to the mind than to the eye, and prefers the subtle delineation of character to the production of impressive spectacles. At the same time his mastery of stage effect has produced many thrilling situations, such as the discovery of the body of Clytaemnestra by Aegisthus[2]. And throughout his plays the mere grouping of the figures is often contrived in a way which shows the greatest plastic genius. To take a single example—the scene at the end of the Ajax. In the centre lies the dead body of the hero; beside it kneel the silent figures of his wife and son; to right and left stand Teucer and Menelaus, inflamed with anger, and disputing with threatening gestures as to the disposal of the body. The arrangement of this scene—with the carefully studied balance of the different parts, and the contrast between the stillness of the central group and the violent agitation of the two combatants—displays all the symmetry and effectiveness of an ancient bas-relief.

§ 4. *The Chorus.*

The seven plays of Sophocles, as we have just seen, belong to that later epoch in the history of Greek tragedy, when it had begun to assume a fixed and conventional shape, and when the period of growth and experiment had been succeeded by a period of maturity and established rule. Hence their structure, when compared with that of the Aeschylean plays, is much more uniform and consistent; and this difference is especially

[1] El. 680-763. [2] Ibid. 1458-1478.

noticeable in the treatment of the chorus. In Aeschylus the chorus is still a flexible institution, varying in character according to the requirements of the composition. In Sophocles its position has become fixed and permanent, and it continually reappears in the same stereotyped form. It may be interesting, therefore, to consider in detail the place which the chorus holds in the dramas of Sophocles, since it is generally admitted that, in all which concerns construction and arrangement, these dramas represent the ancient tragedy in its highest perfection.

In Sophocles, then, the chorus is not only much curtailed, as regards the actual length of its part, but it is also finally excluded from any real share in the action. Though usually connected, by ties of friendship or dependence, with the leading characters, it no longer feels that its own fortunes are at stake, nor does it personally interfere in the course of events. It is true that in the Oedipus Coloneus it steps out of its usual role, and tries to prevent the brutality of Creon; and in the Philoctetes it helps to carry out the frauds of Odysseus. But these exhibitions of activity are so slight and transient as hardly to affect the general statement, that the chorus in Sophocles is not an effective agent in the plot. Its position is that of a witness, sympathetic in temper, but undisturbed by anxiety for its own fate.

For these reasons there is less individuality in the Sophoclean chorus than in that of Aeschylus. Its utterances are characterised by cool and sober reflexion, rather than by violent personal passion. It never indulges in frantic outbursts of terror, as in the Septem; or in ejaculations of extreme despair, as in the Persae; or of malignant revenge, as in the Eumenides. Even when compared with those later choruses of Aeschylus, which approximate most nearly to the Sophoclean type, it displays less depth of emotion and sympathy; and the lamentations of the Theban elders in the Oedipus are but a faint reflexion of the lamentations of the Argive elders in the Agamemnon. The chorus, as it figures in Sophocles, has been removed to a calmer region; it stands aloof from the storm and stress of the action, and assumes the office of an

impartial mediator, holding the balance between the various contending forces.

When we consider more closely the functions of this later chorus, it will be seen that it appears under a double aspect, and performs a double part. Its character in the dialogue, where it takes the place of a regular actor, is very different from its character in the choral odes. Some traces of this variety of treatment are already to be found in Aeschylus; but in Sophocles the distinction is more clearly emphasised, and appears to have been introduced with more deliberate purpose. The office of the Sophoclean chorus, when sharing in the dialogue, is to represent the ordinary mass of human beings, as opposed to the heroic figures upon the stage. There is nothing ideal in its character; it exhibits both the foibles and the excellencies of an average crowd of respectable citizens. It shows no special penetration or insight in its view of events, but is deceived, like every one else, by the pretended repentance of Ajax, and approves of the fatal project of Deianeira[1]. It is not always averse to fraud, even of a base kind; and after participating in the deception practised upon Philoctetes, urges Neoptolemus to the commission of still further treachery[2]. As a rule, however, it is pious and god-fearing; pronounces moderation and reverence for the gods to be the chief source of happiness; and draws lessons of wisdom from the pride and insolence of Creon[3]. It is also loyal to its leaders, and ever ready to sympathise with what is great and noble. Still it is prevented from giving full expression to its better feelings by excessive caution and timidity. Its respect for established authority is unbounded. It hesitates to commiserate with Electra, till assured of the king's absence[4]; and though approving of Antigone's action in its heart, is silent through fear[5]. It discourages all resistance to the law, even in the noblest cause, and is 'not so foolish as to wish to die' for the sake of an idea[6]. Such heroism may 'deserve a certain praise,

[1] Aj. 693 foll. Trach. 588-589.
[2] Phil. 507-517, 833-865.
[3] Ant. 1348-1353.
[4] El. 310-314.
[5] Ant. 504-509.
[6] Ibid. 220.

but rulers must be obeyed[1].' It is irresolute and wavering in its views, easily led away by the last speaker, and incapable of any strong and fixed opinion. Its great desire is to make things smooth, to effect a compromise, and to reconcile opposing powers; and its favourite maxims are that 'there is much to be said on both sides,' and that 'each may learn a great deal from the other[2].'

But when the actors have retired from the stage, and the chorus is left alone to its meditations, it soars to a much higher level, and speaks in a very different strain. Its vision is no longer confined and limited by what is close at hand. Beyond the confusion and turmoil of passing events it sees clearly into the great problems of the drama, and divesting its mind of all petty considerations, judges things by the light of the eternal laws of justice and religion. It then becomes, as it were, the mouthpiece of the poet, and reveals the moral of the play. There is a scene in the Electra which places this distinction in the clearest light. Electra, reduced to despair by the news of Orestes' death, proposes to her sister that they should avenge their father's murder with their own hands. Chrysothemis is appalled by the suggestion, prefers safety to glory, and implores Electra to submit to what is inevitable. The chorus at first join in her entreaties, and point out that prudence and caution are the greatest of blessings[3]. But when the sisters are gone, they change their tone in the ode which follows, upbraiding Chrysothemis for her neglect of her father's memory, and applauding Electra for her faithfulness and self-devotion, and for her reverence towards the mighty laws of heaven[4].

As the dramatic side of tragedy continued, during the course of the fifth century, to expand and develop, the retention of the old choral element began to present increasing

[1] Ant. 872–874.

[2] El. 369–371 μηδὲν πρὸς ὀργὴν πρὸς θεῶν· ὃς τοῖς λόγοις | ἔνεστιν ἀμφοῖν κέρδος, εἰ σὺ μὲν μάθοις | τοῖς τῆσδε χρῆσθαι, τοῖς δὲ σοῖς αὕτη πάλιν. Ant. 724–725 ἄναξ, σέ τ' εἰκός, εἴ τι καίριον λέγει, | μαθεῖν, σέ τ' αὖ τοῦδ· εὖ γὰρ εἴρηται διπλῇ.

[3] El. 1015–1016.

[4] Ibid. 1059–1097.

difficulties. No Greek poet has solved these difficulties with such perfect skill as Sophocles. The chorus in his dramas is blended so artistically with the other portions, that it adds to the beauty of the whole, without impairing the tragic interest. During the dialogue it acts as a foil to the heroic figures upon the stage, accentuating their grandeur by its own feebleness and indecision. In the pauses of the action its grave and solemn strains, intervening between scenes of violence and passion, afford a welcome resting-place to the mind; and while limited in length, so as not to interrupt the progress of events, shed a sort of lyrical splendour over the whole tragedy.

Aristotle, referring to this subject in the Poetics, has one remark which calls for explanation. He declares that the chorus ought to 'form part of the whole, and to join in the action, as in Sophocles, and not as in Euripides[1].' Now it is hardly true to say that the chorus of Sophocles takes any practical share in the action. It never plays a part at all comparable to its part in the Supplices or in the Eumenides of Aeschylus. But such active participation in the events of the drama was altogether antiquated in the time of Aristotle, and lay beyond the range of his speculations. All that he apparently meant by 'joining in the action' was that the choral odes should refer to the subject of the plot, and should not be mere digressions[2]. From this point of view his description of the Sophoclean chorus is perfectly accurate. The odes of Sophocles all relate to the subject of the drama. In general they consist of reflexions and meditations suggested by the recent events[3]. Sometimes, again, they are prayers for help,

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 18 καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἕνα δεῖ ὑπολαβεῖν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μόριον εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου, καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ' ὥσπερ Σοφοκλεῖ.

[2] That this was his meaning is proved by what follows. After saying that the chorus should 'take part in the action, not as in Euripides, but as in Sophocles,' he adds, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς τὰ ᾀδόμενα οὐδὲν μᾶλλον τοῦ μύθου ἢ ἄλλης τραγῳδίας ἐστίν. διὸ ἐμβόλιμα ᾄδουσιν, πρῶτον ἄρξαντος Ἀγάθωνος τοῦ τοιούτου. Elsewhere, too, he describes the chorus as an interested witness, which sympathises, but never interferes (Probl. 6. 19 ἔστι γὰρ ὁ χορὸς κηδευτὴς ἄπρακτος, εὔνοιαν γὰρ μόνον παρέχεται οἷς πάρεστι.

[3] e.g. Oed. Tyr. 1186 foll. (the vanity of human fortune), Oed. Col. 1211 foll. (the miseries of old age), Ant. 781 foll. (the power of love), Oed. Tyr. 863 foll. (the sanctity of oracles), El.

or descriptions of preceding circumstances[1]. Sometimes the reference is less direct, as in the Antigone, where the heroine is to be buried alive, and the chorus recall similar cases of immurement from the old legends[2]. But though the connexion varies in point of closeness, it is always obvious and intelligible.

§ 5. *The Characters.*

The change which was effected by Sophocles in the general scope and purpose of Greek tragedy has already been described. Under his guidance the centre of interest was transferred from the problems of religion to the problems of human nature itself; and the structure of the plot and the arrangement of the scenes were made subservient to one main object—the representation of character. In the painting of human character the supremacy of Sophocles has been generally admitted by ancient as well as modern critics. In some respects, indeed, he falls short of his two great rivals. The extremes of passionate emotion—the frenzy of a Cassandra, and the jealous fury of a Medea—are depicted with greater power by Aeschylus and Euripides. But in subtlety and delicacy of portraiture, in keen analysis of motive, and in depth of insight into the complex recesses of the human heart, it would be difficult to find his rival. The fineness of his touch was the admiration of the ancients, and is seen, more especially, in the skill and penetration with which he often hits off a character in a single line[3]. His plays abound in those concise and pregnant phrases which reveal a man's soul, as it were, at one glance. The force of such expressions can hardly be reproduced in a translation; but we may mention, as an example, the scene in which the dying Oedipus entrusts his two daughters to

473 foll. (the malignity of the ancestral curse).

[1] e.g. Oed. Col. 1556 foll., Ant. 1115 foll (prayers to the gods), Oed. Tyr. 151 foll. (description of the plague at Thebes), Ant. 100 foll. (description of the Argive defeat).

[2] Ant. 944 foll. Cp. Oed. Col. 668 foll., where, when Theseus has granted an asylum to Oedipus, the chorus sing the praises of Athens.

[3] Vita Soph. p. 7 *οἷδε δὲ καιρὸν συμμετρῆσαι καὶ πράγματα, ὥστ' ἐκ μικροῦ ἡμιστιχίου ἢ λέξεως μίας ὅλον ἠθοποιεῖν πρόσωπον.*

the care of Theseus, and the latter, 'like a man of noble spirit, without making lamentations' swears to fulfil the charge[1]. This single brief phrase conveys a picture of high-bred courtesy and delicate reserve, which no amount of further description could improve upon.

His varied knowledge of the human heart is likewise proved by the multiplicity of the types of character which he introduces, and by the fecundity with which he creates new and diverse figures. It is rare for him to repeat himself, as in the case of Chrysothemis and Ismene. In general, even when the same hero reappears in different plays, he is depicted in a new character, to suit the altered circumstances. Thus Creon, who plays a prominent part in three of the extant tragedies, is a different man in each of them. In the Oedipus Coloneus he is a heartless villain, brutal and deferential by turns, who, when his proposals are rejected by Oedipus, reveals the spite and malignity of his nature by robbing him of his two daughters. Again, in the Antigone, he is a narrow bigot, not destitute of good qualities, but wholly wrapt up in strict and formal rules of statesmanship. Antigone's heroic sense of duty is incomprehensible to him. The one idea which possesses his mind is the fear of rebellion against the laws, and especially rebellion by women; and sooner than endure to be called 'weaker than a woman' he will risk the loss of everything. Lastly, in the Oedipus Rex he is a person of humane and sympathetic disposition, who replies with quiet dignity to the unjust aspersions of Oedipus, and when the catastrophe has fallen, betrays no trace of malicious exultation, but does his best to alleviate the sufferings of the victim.

Though human nature is the main subject of interest in the dramas of Sophocles, it is human nature in a refined and idealised form, equally removed from the excessive grandeur of Aeschylus, and from the realism of later poetry. The aim of Sophocles, as of the old Greek portrait painters, is to make his

[1] Oed. Col. 1636, 1637 *ὁ δ', ὡς ἀνὴρ γενναῖος, οὐκ οἴκτου μέτα | κατῄνεσεν τάδ' ὅρκιος δράσειν ξένῳ.* Cp. also Teucer's description (Aj. 1010) of his father Telamon as one *ὅτῳ πάρα | μηδ' εὐτυχοῦντι μηδὲν ἥδιον γελᾶν.*

copies of mankind 'like the original, but more beautiful[1].' His characters are thoroughly human characters, swayed by the ordinary passions and emotions; but a sort of splendour from the heroic age hangs over them. They are seen, as it were, through a glorious veil of romance and poetry, which beautifies their outline, and excludes from view everything which is low and despicable. Men of a base disposition are seldom introduced, though the Creon of the Oedipus Coloneus is an exception. But for the most part Sophocles prefers to dwell on the brighter side of human nature, and even his bad characters have many redeeming features. The vices which they display are the vices of a large and open spirit, such as anger, revenge, and ambition, rather than the meaner qualities of craft and cowardice. The spirit in which he approached the task of delineation is best expressed in his own well-known criticism, that he 'drew men as they ought to be, while Euripides drew them as they are[2].'

His leading characters are mostly of a strong and forceful type, vehement in passion, and immovable in courage, like those of Aeschylus; but with a softer side to their character, which brings them nearer to the human level. Conspicuous in this class are the heroic maidens, Electra and Antigone. Stern devotion to duty is the basis of their character. Where conscience and justice are concerned, they are firm and unshaken as a rock. Electra shows no traces of compunction, even when her mother is being slain, but bids Orestes 'strike again[3]'; she would 'throw the body of Aegisthus to the dogs, the only burial he deserves[4].' Both of them, too, are easily roused to indignation, have no tolerance for natures weaker than themselves, and pour unmerited scorn and contempt on their more timid sisters. But they are capable of tenderness no less profound. It was Electra who tended Orestes when he was

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 15 *ὁμοίους ποιοῦντες καλλίους γράφουσιν*. In his manner of characterisation Sophocles resembles Homer rather than Aeschylus: cp. Vita Soph. p. 7 *ἠθοποιεῖ δὲ . . . Ὁμηρικὴν ἐκματτόμενος χάριν*.

[2] Aristot. Poet. c. 25 *Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν οἵους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἷοι εἰσίν*.

[3] El. 1415.

[4] Ibid. 1487–1488.

a babe 'with sweet labour' even as a mother[1]; and it is Antigone whose nature is 'to love rather than to hate,' and who gladly sacrifices her life for the sake of her brother[2]. Ajax is another of these strong and resolute characters, whom no appeal can soften. Yet even he is touched with compassion when he thinks of his parents' grief, and of the 'great and bitter cries' which will issue from his mother's lips, when the tidings of his death are brought to Salamis[3].

Side by side with these powerful and striking personalities are a group of gentler beings, whose disposition is more yielding and tractable. Such are the timorous but affectionate Ismene, the tearful Tecmessa, and the dutiful Hyllus. Characters of this kind usually play a subordinate part, and are introduced as a foil to the strength and vigour of the protagonist. But sometimes even the chief personage is of a softer type, especially in the later plays, where the colouring becomes more human, and less heroic. Philoctetes is an admirable specimen. His nature is far from being strong or masterful. At first he entreats the chorus to leave him; but afterwards, when he sees they are going, falters in his resolution, and implores them to stay[4]. He shows a childish vanity in regard to his sufferings; longs to prove to Neoptolemus 'how brave he had been,' by showing him the cave where he had lived in solitude; and is afflicted by nothing so much as by the news that Greece had never heard of his misfortunes[5]. The attractiveness of his character lies, not in its force and power, but in its simplicity and open-heartedness.

Characters from humble life—nurses, watchmen, shepherds, and attendants—are freely introduced by Sophocles. His idealism, like that of the Greek poets in general, was not of the fastidious kind which despises such personages as beneath its dignity, and which led Voltaire, in his imitation of the Oedipus, to substitute for the two 'herdsmen' a 'favourite' and a 'counsellor.' But while these humble figures are represented

[1] El. 1143–1148.
[2] Ant. 522.
[3] Aj. 845–851.
[4] Phil. 1177–1181.
[5] Ibid. 533–535, 254–256.

by Sophocles with perfect truthfulness, the portraiture is so delicately handled, and the traits of common life are suggested with so much reserve, as not to interfere with the graceful beauty of the general tone. One of the most interesting specimens of this class is the watchman in the Antigone, the only comic character in Sophocles, and one whose forced and artificial humour reminds us of Shakespeare's clowns[1]. Another person of the same type is the messenger in the Trachiniae, who frankly confesses that he has brought the tidings in order to 'gain some advantage for himself,' and who, with an honest bluntness that is impervious to the hints of Lichas, persists in revealing the fatal secret, and then consoles himself with the reflexion that 'if his words are unwelcome, he has spoken the truth[2].'

Female characters are far more prominent in Sophocles than in Aeschylus, and play the leading part in three of his extant dramas. In fact, his art is nowhere more conspicuously shown than in his portraits of women. But while the tenderness, and devotion, and heroism of woman's nature are drawn with the deepest sympathy, the more sentimental and passionate side of the relationship between the sexes is comparatively ignored. Antigone, when led forth to death, while regretting her exclusion from the joys of wedlock, shows no sorrow for the loss of her lover. Ajax treats Tecmessa with sullen indifference, is merely irritated by her anxious solicitude, and in his dying speech, while fondly recalling the memory of his father and mother, has no thought for the wife he is leaving. Hercules displays the same callous disregard for Deianeira. Deianeira herself, though her anxiety to regain his love is the motive of the play, shows none of the passionate jealousy of a neglected wife, but submits to his will in perfect patience, and even welcomes home her rival without a murmur, since it is her husband's pleasure. From these examples it would appear that Sophocles shared to some extent in the ordinary Attic feeling of the fifth century, which regarded the relationship of man and wife, and

[1] Ant. 223–236, 315–331. [2] Trach. 88, 89, 373, 374.

the whole arrangements concerning marriage, as a matter of business, in which sentiment had very little place.

§ 6. *The Language.*

The critic Dionysius, in his treatise on the art of literary composition, divides the various kinds of diction into three classes—the 'austere style,' with its rough force and archaic simplicity, the 'flowery style,' with its soft and flowing attractiveness, and the 'middle style,' which comes between the two, and unites the excellencies of both, combining smoothness with power, and grace with dignity[1]. This last kind is in his opinion the most perfect of all forms of diction, and Sophocles its most distinguished exponent among tragic poets[2]. The propriety of the above description, at any rate so far as it applies to Sophocles, will hardly be disputed. Indeed, there is no Greek poet whose works exhibit in greater perfection the peculiar characteristics of the 'middle style'—the combination of supreme beauty of form with masculine strength and energy. The pre-eminence of Sophocles in these two points was universally recognised by the ancients. The grace and sweetness of his language procured for him, among his contemporaries, the title of 'the Bee'; and his lips were said by Aristophanes to have been 'smeared with honey[3].' But the incisive force and pungency which accompany this sweetness excited no less admiration, and led the comic dramatists to compare his poetry to 'strong Pramnian wine,' and to suggest that he was 'helped in his compositions by a Molossian hound[4].'

In one of his recorded utterances Sophocles has given us an interesting account of the development of his style. He began,

[1] *αὐστηρά, ἀνθηρά,* and *κοινὴ ἁρμονία,* Dion. Hal., Comp. Verb. cc. 22–24.

[2] Ibid. c. 24.

[3] Aristoph. Frag. Incert. 2 *ὁ δ' αὖ Σοφοκλέους τοῦ μέλιτι κεχρισμένου | ὥσπερ καδίσκου περιέλειχε τὸ στόμα.* Suidas (v. Σοφοκλῆς), *προσηγορεύθη δὲ μέλιττα διὰ τὸ γλυκύ.* So also Schol. Aristoph. Vesp. 460; Schol. Soph. Oed. Col. 17, Aj. 1199. The Vita (p. 7 Dindf.) says he received the name, because he culled beauties from all his predecessors. But this is obviously a fanciful explanation.

[4] Diog. Laert. 4. 20 *ἦν, κατὰ τὸν Φρύνιχον, οὐ γλύξις, οὐδ' ὑπόχυτος, ἀλλὰ Πράμνιος . . . κατὰ τὸν κωμικὸν τὰ ποιήματα αὐτῷ κύων τις ἐδόκει συμποιεῖν Μολοττικός.*

he says, by imitating the pomp of Aeschylus. At a later period the originality of his own genius asserted itself; but the form of diction which he then adopted was disfigured by 'harshness and artificiality.' Finally he succeeded in weeding out those defects to which he was naturally prone, and evolved a style which he considered the 'best of all,' and the 'most suitable for the display of human character[1].' The remaining tragedies apparently belong, for the most part, to that final period in which he had moulded his style to his own satisfaction. No great variety can be observed in the diction; and there are no visible traces of his first manner, with its Aeschylean pomp and grandeur. But it is still perhaps possible, on comparing the earlier with the later plays, to detect some symptoms of that harshness and artificiality to which he refers. The Antigone, for example, as contrasted with the Philoctetes and the Oedipus Coloneus, is less easy, and mellow, and spontaneous in its diction; strained and violent usages, and artificial involutions of phrase, occur with comparative frequency, and exemplify the vice which Sophocles himself censured in his later years[2]. Hence the Antigone, and in the same way the Ajax, should perhaps be assigned to the end of the second period, in which his final manner had not yet been fully developed.

Few styles could be more opposed to that of Aeschylus than the style of Sophocles in his extant writings. The diction which he there employs is conspicuous, above all things, for its precision, and accuracy, and self-restraint. The various images, metaphors, epithets, and circumlocutions, in which the older poet luxuriated, are introduced by him only with a very sparing hand. It is true that in this respect he makes a difference between the dialogue and the choral odes, in which latter he allows a freer rein to his imagination, and his language, in

[1] Plut. Profect. Virt. c. 7 ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἔλεγε, τὸν Αἰσχύλου διαπεπαιχὼς ὄγκον, εἶτα τὸ πικρὸν καὶ κατάτεχνον τῆς αὐτοῦ κατασκευῆς, τρίτον ἤδη τὸ τῆς λέξεως μεταβάλλειν εἶδος, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἠθικώτατον καὶ βέλτιστον.

[2] E. g. Ant. 2, 3 ἆρ' οἶσθ' ὅτι Ζεὺς τῶν ἀπ' Οἰδίπου κακῶν | ὁποῖον οὐχὶ νῷν ἔτι ζώσαιν τελεῖ; 1278–1280 ὦ δέσποθ', ὡς ἔχων τε καὶ κεκτημένος, | τὰ μὲν πρὸ χειρῶν τάδε φέρων, τὰ δ' ἐν δόμοις | ἔοικας ἥκειν καὶ τάχ' ὄψεσθαι κακά.

consequence, becomes more gorgeous and exuberant[1]. Yet even here there is a moderation of tone, and a suggestion of reserved force, which are the very antithesis of Aeschylean profusion. But in the dialogue it is evident that he regarded such ornament as mostly out of place, however appropriate it might be to picturesque narrative or lyrical passion. He considered, as we learn from his own words, that it distracted the mind from the main purpose of tragedy—the revelation of human character[2]. Not that even his dialogue can be called thin, or bare, or deficient in colour. Epithets and images are introduced, on the right occasion, with powerful effect, and their very infrequency gives them additional force. Nor is it true to say, with Dionysius, that Sophocles is never redundant, and never uses more words than are necessary[3]. On the contrary he shows a certain partiality for pleonastic expressions, when they serve to emphasise and intensify the thought. Ajax, for example, rushes forth 'unsummoned and called by no messengers,' and Creon 'tarries beyond reason more than the fitting time[4].' But these redundancies are never introduced without any special significance, and merely in order to impart resonance to the language.

Among the other qualities of the Sophoclean style one of the most distinctive is the subtlety and intricate delicacy of the phraseology. Sophocles, like Virgil and Tacitus among the Romans, is one of those artists in language who seem to exult in their power over the instrument which they employ, and who love to play experiments with words, to bend them to their will, and to strain their capacity to the utmost. He is a master of those felicitous and artfully chosen phrases, which

[1] See for example, Ant. 332–359, where picturesque epithets are used with the profusion of Aeschylus.

[2] He says expressly that he considered his last style the best for this reason, that it was 'most conducive to the display of character' (ἠθικώτατον, Plut. Profect. Virt. c. 7).

[3] Dion. Hal., Vett. Script. Cens. c. 11 καὶ Σοφοκλῆς μὲν οὐ περιττὸς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἀλλ' ἀναγκαῖος.

[4] Aj. 289 ἄκλητος οὔθ' ὑπ' ἀγγέλων | κληθεὶς ἀφορμᾷς. Oed. Tyr. 74 τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα | ἄπεστι πλείω τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου. Sophocles is especially fond of redundant government, for the sake of emphasis, as in Phil. 31 κενὴν οἰκήσειν ἀνθρώπων δίχα, Aj. 464 γυμνὸν φανέντα τῶν ἀριστείων ἄτερ, Ant. 445, 919, &c. See Jebb's note on Oed. Tyr. 1126.

tantalise the reader by their beauty and suggestiveness, stimulating his curiosity, while they elude exact analysis. His delight, too, in pregnant conciseness of expression often leads him to compress a whole series of ideas into a single noun or verb[1]. Above all he closely resembles Virgil in the half-veiled allusiveness of his style. He chooses some skilful combination of words, which, beyond its obvious significance, calls to mind yet other combinations, and opens out new vistas of thought[2]. Various fancies and recollections appear to hover round the lines, suggested by the subtlety of the terms employed; and the language, in such cases, becomes alive with meaning, like an atmosphere quivering with diverse-coloured lights.

The same masterful supremacy over forms of diction is shown by Sophocles in many other ways, and especially in his bold innovations in grammar, and in his extensions and modifications in the meaning of words and phrases. The licence which he adopts in these matters has often been ascribed to the fluid and unformed condition of Attic Greek in the fifth century. But the fact that similar boldness is displayed by Virgil and Tacitus, though dealing with a language which had been fixed and stereotyped by previous usage, would seem to show that liberties of this kind are not confined to any particular stage of literary history, but are mainly due to the individual bent of the writer's genius. No ancient author, however, has carried them to a greater length than Sophocles. He treats the syntax of the cases with special freedom, employing them in

[1] Cp. Ant. 971 ἕλκος τυφλωθέν, 'inflicted so as to blind.' Aj. 55 ἔκειρε φόνον, 'dealt slaughter with the sword.' Oed. Tyr. 313 ῥῦσαι πᾶν μίασμα, 'rescue the defilement,' i. e. 'rescue us from it.' See Jebb's notes on these passages.

[2] e. g. Trach. 494 ἃ τ' ἀντὶ δώρων δῶρα χρὴ προσαρμόσαι, where the word προσαρμόσαι, 'give as a fitting return,' inevitably suggests how the fatal garment will be 'fastened' to the body of Hercules. Trach. 836 δεινοτάτῳ μὲν ὕδρας προστεταικὼς φάσματι, 'gripped in the embrace of the monster,' where there is a covert allusion to the robe which is glued to his flesh. Ant. 1345 πάντα γὰρ λέχρια τἀν χεροῖν, where λέχρια not only denotes that everything he handles is 'amiss,' but also suggests the 'prone' corpse in his hands. Oed. Col. 189 εὐσεβίας ἐπιβαίνοντες, 'enter on the path of piety,' with an allusion to the fact that they are leaving the sacred grove, and entering lawful ground. Cp. also Ant. 570; Oed. Tyr. 262, 987; Oed. Col. 1220; Aj. 558.

strained and novel constructions[1]. He attaches a new modal significance to verbs[2]. He resembles Antiphon and Thucydides in his frequent coinage of abstract nouns out of neuter participles[3]. He uses words and phrases in their literal and etymological, as opposed to their conventional, meaning[4]. He gives a fresh turn to well-worn idioms by a change of structure[5]. Lastly, he rejoices in those confusions of syntax to which the Greek was always prone, and by which one construction is suddenly merged into another[6].

It will be seen from these examples than the style of Sophocles is not an easy one, but keeps the reader continually on the alert. There is much more in the language than appears upon the mere surface; and in order to appreciate all the subtle shades of meaning, and all the niceties and intricacies of expression, much study is required. But the labour is well bestowed, and each fresh perusal of his plays reveals some new beauty and delicacy of phrase which had previously escaped notice. Much of this exquisite charm, it is true, must have been lost in the theatre, where the audience would hardly have leisure, during the progress of the actual performance, to unravel all the fine complexities of the diction. At the same time, though the language of Sophocles is full of latent meaning,

[1] e. g. Phil. 43 φορβῆς νόστος, 'journey for food'; 126 κατασχολάζειν τοῦ χρόνου, 'linger behind the time.' Aj. 877 τὴν ἀφ' ἡλίου βολῶν κέλευθον . . . φανείς, 'seen in the western path.'

[2] Thus ἐπινωμᾶν and προσνωμᾶν are intrans. in Phil. 168, 717; ἐφίστασθαι, causal in Trach. 339; ψάω intrans. in Trach. 678; κυκλεῖν intrans. in Trach. 129; φέρειν middle in Oed. Col. 6.

[3] So Trach. 196 τὸ ποθοῦν, 'desire'; Oed. Col. 1220 τὸ θέλον, 'wish'; 1604 πᾶν δρῶν, 'all activity' (if the reading is correct).

[4] Thus ἀκρατής = 'weak,' not 'without control' (Oed. Col. 1236). πρωτόγονος = 'high-born,' not 'first-born' (Phil. 180). ἀρτίπους = 'opportune,' not 'sound of foot' (Trach. 58). αὐτόφωρος = 'self-detected,' not 'taken in the act' (Ant. 51). ἄπρακτος = 'not plotted against' (Ant. 1035). In Oed. Col. 1764 πράττειν καλῶς = 'accomplish duly,' instead of the usual 'fare well.' In Ant. 988 δύ' ἐξ ἑνὸς βλέποντε = 'by means of one,' instead of 'where one saw before.'

[5] Oed. Tyr. 287 οὐκ ἐν ἀργοῖς πράττεσθαι, an extension of οὐκ ἐν ἀργοῖς καταλείπειν. El. 1327 παρ' οὐδὲν τοῦ βίου κήδεσθαι, on the analogy of παρ' οὐδὲν τὸν βίον ποιεῖσθαι. Ant. 639 οὕτω διὰ στέρνων ἔχειν, 'be so disposed in mind,' a reminiscence of δι' ὀργῆς ἔχειν τινά, and similar phrases.

[6] E. g. Phil. 54 τὴν Φιλοκτήτου σε δεῖ|ψυχὴν ὅπως λόγοισιν ἐκκλέψεις λέγων. Oed. Col. 385 ἤδη γὰρ ἔσχες ἐλπίδ' ὡς ἐμοῦ θεοὺς | ὥραν τιν' ἕξειν.

its general significance is clear and intelligible; indeed, in the case of dramas which, like his, were written for the stage, a certain lucidity of expression is indispensable. Still it is evident, from the minute diligence bestowed upon the style, that his tragedies, though intended primarily for dramatic performance, were also designed as a 'possession for ever,' to be enjoyed and studied in private; and it is only in this way that their full beauty can be appreciated.

In addition to his innovations in grammatical usage Sophocles was no less prolific than Aeschylus in the coinage of new words, and enriched the language with a whole vocabulary of expressive compounds [1]. But his formations are of a different class from those of Aeschylus, and reflect the peculiarities of his style. The compounds of Aeschylus are mostly formed out of nouns and verbs, which produce, in combination, some picturesque and sensuous image, such as 'starry-kirtled' and 'canvas-winged.' In the compounds of Sophocles, on the other hand, one of the component parts is generally a preposition or an adverb, which merely serves to intensify the significance of the whole word, or to convey some delicate distinction of meaning [2]. Hence his new formations have none of the sound and splendour of the Aeschylean epithets. They possess, however, a certain keen and penetrating force which is no less effective in its own way, and which imparts to his language much of that incisive energy and subtle precision which the ancients admired [3].

The metaphors and similes of Sophocles, like those of

[1] See Schulz, Quae nova Sophocles protulerit verba composita, Königsberg, 1882. Kriebitzsch, Quaestiones de usu verborum cum praepositionibus compositorum apud Sophoclem, Halle, 1881. Schulz and Kriebitzsch have made a collection of all the compound nouns, adjectives, and verbs which are not found in any writer before the time of Sophocles, and which amount to more than a thousand.

[2] Cp. the remark of the Scholiast on Oed. Col. 1648 ἴδιον αὐτοῦ τὸ πολλάκις κεχρῆσθαι προθέσεσι.

[3] The following examples will show the character of his new coinages:—(1) substantives, δυσχείρωμα, ἐπιθυμίαμα, ἐνθάκησις, εὐορνιθία, εἰσοίκησις, ἀνακούφισις, (2) adjectives, ἀσάλπικτος, ἐξοικήσιμος, δυσπρόσοιστος, δυσούριστος, ἀπόμορφος, καταλύσιμος, ἀντιπλήξ, διώδυνος, ἐπόψιμος, ἐξόμιλος, περιπτυχής, (3) verbs, ἀπολωφίζω, ἐπθεάομαι, ἐκπομπάζω, ἐξαπμάζω, ἐκλήγω, ἐξιχνοσκοπέω, παρενθύνω, προκηραίνω, κατουρίζω, κατανικάω, ἐμπίνω, ἐπισχολάζομαι, διαστόω, διατίλλω.

Aeschylus and Homer, are of a simple kind, as far as the object of comparison is concerned, being mostly taken from outward nature, or from the ordinary occupations of mankind, such as building and sailing. But the hand of Sophocles is everywhere apparent in the ingenuity with which they are introduced, and the refinement and nicety of expression with which they are worked out. The description of Ajax sulking in his tent, while the insolence of his foes, no longer checked by his presence, 'speeds on its way without fear down cool breezy glens,' is a delightful example of the grace and originality with which he employs an ordinary comparison [1]. His use of imagery, however, as we have previously pointed out, is restrained within moderate limits; and he rarely confuses two incongruous metaphors, or heaps one metaphor upon another, with the impetuosity of Aeschylus. But he is often no less intricate, though in a different way. After beginning a comparison, he frequently pursues it in language which is partly metaphorical, partly not; and blends the image and the reality into a complex train of ideas which is truly Sophoclean. Thus in the opening lyrics of the Antigone, where the chorus compare the Argive host to an eagle, the two notions of an invading army, and of a bird swooping on its prey, are perpetually passing one into the other throughout the whole of their description. 'Like a shrill-screaming eagle,' they say, 'he flew over into our land, sheathed in snow-white wings, with an armed throng, and with horsehair crests. He paused above our dwellings; he ravened around our seven-fold portals with spears athirst for slaughter. But he went hence ere his jaws were glutted with our blood, or the pine-fed flames of the Fire-god had seized our crown of towers [2].'

Many traces are to be found, even in Sophocles, of that Athenian delight in rhetoric, which was destined eventually to exercise a baneful influence upon Greek tragedy. In Sophocles,

[1] Aj. 196–198 ἐχθρῶν δ' ὕβρις | ἀτάρβητος ὁρμᾶται | ἐν εὐανέμοις βάσσαις.

[2] Ant. 112–123 ὀξέα κλάζων | ἀετὸς ἐς γᾶν ὡς ὑπερέπτα, | λευκῆς χιόνος πτέρυγι στεγανός, | πολλῶν μεθ' ὅπλων | ξύν θ' ἱπποκόμοις κορύθεσσι. | στὰς δ' ὑπὲρ μελάθρων, φονώσαισιν ἀμφιχανὼν κύκλῳ | λόγχαις ἑπτάπυλον στόμα, | ἔβα, πρίν ποθ' ἁμετέρων αἱμάτων γένυσιν | πλησθῆναί τε καὶ στεφάνωμα πύργων | πευκάενθ' Ἥφαιστον ἑλεῖν.

however, the evil effects are not as yet very apparent. Though his plays are full of scenes of contention, where one set speech is delivered against another, these scenes rarely degenerate into mere displays of oratory. Perhaps the nearest approach to such a fault is to be found in the concluding portion of the Ajax, where the long altercations between Teucer and the two brothers appear tedious and protracted to a modern reader, their interest being oratorical rather than tragic. But the rhetoric of Sophocles is usually of a higher kind, and avoids the formality of professional eloquence. It appears to come from the heart, and has a psychological significance, revealing the inmost character of the speaker. Take, for example, Electra's contention with her mother on the subject of Agamemnon's murder. Her whole speech, though rhetorical in tone, is thoroughly natural and characteristic[1]. It begins with argument, ends with passion. At first she tries to keep cool, and to answer the various pleas with deliberation; but her feelings soon become too much for her, she is carried away by her indignation, and ends her speech with a long tirade, full of threats of vengeance, and passionate references to her own wrongs, and the wrongs of Orestes. In the gradual rise of her emotion, in her efforts to control herself, and in her final burst of fury, the strength and weakness of her nature are powerfully exhibited.

§ 7. *Religious and Moral Ideas.*

In the tragedies of Aeschylus the dramatist is often overshadowed by the moral teacher. The religious truths and maxims which underlie the facts of the legend are drawn out and emphasised with such persistency as not unfrequently to retard the progress of the action. In Sophocles, on the other hand, the dramatic interest always holds the first place. But in spite of this change of standpoint, there is little diminution in the spiritual significance of tragedy. The plays of Sophocles are far from being mere artistic studies, devoid of moral import.

[1] El. 558–609.

Human nature, to him, has more than a psychological interest. The passions and sufferings of mankind are everywhere painted, not only as they appear in themselves, but also as they appear in relation to the eternal laws of justice and divine government. The mysterious decrees of destiny are always visible in the background of the picture; and the actions of mortal men, when seen under this aspect, acquire unwonted grandeur and impressiveness. But although, throughout his dramas, the ethical purpose is hardly less deep and profound than in those of Aeschylus, it manifests itself in a different way. It is never obtruded on the view, but kept in due subordination; its presence is felt and implied, rather than distinctly emphasised; and it permeates the whole tragedy with a sort of unseen influence.

Owing to this reticence on the part of Sophocles, his feelings on the great questions of religion are not always easy to determine[1]. But there can be little doubt that, as far as the popular legends are concerned, he belonged to a later stage than Aeschylus in the history of religious belief, and that he regarded them, no longer as revelations of truth, but only as picturesque and striking fictions. It is true that he everywhere handles the old mythology with the utmost tenderness, and addresses the gods of the people in language of pious reverence. The legendary deities still figure in his dramas as the directors of human destiny. It is the oracle of Apollo which foretells the disasters of Laius and Oedipus, and urges on Orestes to the work of retribution; and it is Athene who compasses the fall of Ajax. Moreover, reverence for the established forms of worship is enforced on all occasions[2], and Athens is extolled for this very quality, that 'she knows, more than any other land, how to honour the gods with due ceremonies[3].' But although in all these matters he reflects the popular traditions and feelings of the time, yet the impression which he produces is not the same as that produced by Aeschylus. He nowhere

[1] On this subject see Abbott's admirable article in Hellenica; and Lübker, Die Sophokleische Theologie.

[2] E. g. Oed. Tyr. 885-888, 895-910.

[3] Oed. Col. 1006-1007.

shows the same earnestness and anxiety in dealing with the sacred legends; his tone is rather that of a man who has outgrown the simple creed of his countrymen, but recognises its value and efficacy, and everywhere speaks of it with veneration.

His own inmost beliefs are revealed in occasional passages, where he abandons the language of the popular religion, and speaks in a loftier strain. They are principles independent of any particular creed, and applicable to all times and places. Foremost among them is the conviction, as definite in Sophocles as in Aeschylus, that the world is governed by divine laws, whose duration is everlasting. 'Not to-day nor yesterday' were they created, 'but from all time, and no man knows when first they were brought forth[1].' They were 'begotten in the serene heights of heaven; no mortal race of men gave birth to them, nor shall forgetfulness ever lay them to sleep[2].' These laws are synonymous with justice, and ordain 'reverent purity in every word and deed[3].' They are inscribed, not on stone, but in the hearts and consciences of men[4]. To some they are revealed, from others they are hidden. Antigone knows and understands them, but Creon is deaf to their injunctions[5]. Though they often clash with human law, in the end they are triumphant; and Creon, who has set them at defiance in prohibiting the burial of Polyneices, finds when too late that 'it is best to keep the laws established by heaven, even to the end of life[6].'

Side by side with these divine ordinances there exists a supreme and eternal being who presides over the universe. Sometimes this omnipotent being appears to be represented by Zeus, though as a rule the Zeus of Sophocles is merely the god of the Greek mythology, and the son of Earth and Cronus[7].

[1] Ant. 453–457 *οὐδὲ σθένειν τοσοῦτον ᾠόμην τὰ σὰ | κηρύγμαθ', ὥστ' ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν | νόμιμα δύνασθαι θνητὸν ὄντ' ὑπερδραμεῖν. | οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κἀχθές, ἀλλ' ἀεί ποτε | ζῇ ταῦτα, κοὐδεὶς οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου 'φάνη.*

[2] Oed. Tyr. 865–870 *ἃν νόμοι πρόκειν-ται | ὑψίποδες, οὐρανίαν | δι' αἰθέρα τεκνω-θέντες, ἃν Ὄλυμπος | πατὴρ μόνος, οὐδέ νιν | θνατὰ φύσις ἀνέρων | ἔτικτεν, οὐδὲ μήποτε λάθα κατακοιμάσῃ.*

[3] Ant. 451. Oed. Col. 1382. Oed. Tyr. 863–866.

[4] Ant. 454 *ἄγραπτα θεῶν νόμιμα.*

[5] Ibid. 499–501.

[6] Ibid. 1113, 1114.

[7] E. g. Ant. 1116. Phil. 391. Trach. 127.

But not unfrequently he is addressed in language which seems to shadow forth the poet's own conception of the nature of the supreme ruler. He is 'the sole dispenser of the future,' who 'abides in heaven for ever, overseeing and guiding all things[1].' His power is everlasting, and 'neither all-subduing sleep, nor the unwearied months of heaven, can overmaster it[2].' In his hands is placed the administration of those eternal laws to which the whole universe is subject, and 'Justice, proclaimed from of old, sits with Zeus by everlasting decree[3].'

The signs and proofs of this divine order in the world are to be seen in the retribution which inevitably falls upon guilt and injustice. On this point Sophocles is no less emphatic than Aeschylus. Wickedness, according to his teaching, can never prosper. 'If a man walks proudly in word or deed, with no fear of Justice, and follows unrighteous gains, how shall he escape the arrows of the gods[4]?' Sometimes evil-doers are cut off in the very moment of triumph by the 'swift-footed vengeance of heaven[5]'; at other times punishment appears to be delayed; but 'the gods, though slow, are sure in visiting crime, when men abandon godliness and turn to evil[6].'

So far the ideas of Sophocles coincide in the main with those of Aeschylus. But he is less optimistic in his view of man's destiny. He cannot shut his eyes to the fact that, while crime is punished, innocence is not always protected, and suffering and misfortune often overtake the guiltless. This truth is exemplified in most of his extant dramas. Antigone is put to death, because she obeys the laws of God rather than the laws of man, and Oedipus is plunged into overwhelming disasters by a cause external to himself. Deianeira and Philoctetes are similar examples of unmerited suffering. Often, again, this misery is the result of ancient crimes, in which the victims have had no share, but of which they feel the effects. For 'when a house is once shaken from heaven, the curse ceases never-

[1] El. 173–175. Frag. 531 (Nauck).
[2] Oed. Tyr. 905. Ant. 604–610.
[3] Oed. Col. 1381 εἴπερ ἐστὶν ἡ παλαίφατος | Δίκη ξύνεδρος Ζηνὸς ἀρχαίοις νόμοις.
[4] Oed. Tyr. 883–892. Cp. Phil. 1035–1039; El. 245–250; Ant. 370.
[5] Ant. 1103, 1104.
[6] Oed. Col. 1536, 1537.

more, but passes on from generation to generation,' bringing forth pain and sorrow; even as the surge, when driven by fierce Thracian blasts, 'rolls up the black sand from the depths of the sea[1].'

In his treatment of this matter Sophocles diverges widely from Aeschylus. It is the constant aim of Aeschylus to show that misfortune is connected with sin, and never entirely undeserved; and that even when an ancestor's crimes are being expiated, there is always some contributory guilt on the part of the sufferer. Sophocles has no such conviction. He admits the existence of unmerited evil, and makes no attempt to reconcile the fact with the justice of the eternal laws. These deviations from strict equity must be accepted and recognised as part of the order of the universe, though their reason is inexplicable to human wisdom. They are mysteries which, 'if God conceals, no man can discover, however long he search[2].'

Yet the conclusion which he draws from these reflexions is not altogether despondent or fatalistic; it is the old Greek moral of moderation and self-distrust. All human fortune is full of uncertainty, and mankind are but 'phantoms and airy shadows,' whose prosperity 'passes away as swiftly as the leaves of the slender poplar[3].' Hence it is foolishness 'to reckon on the morrow, or on the days beyond[4].' But at the same time the world is governed by divine laws, though their workings are often difficult to explain. Veneration for these laws is the truest wisdom, and the best safeguard against misfortune. 'Revere the gods,' says Hercules, 'all things else are of less account in the eyes of Zeus[5].' Reverence, moderation, and humility are the qualities which, according to Sophocles, avail a man best in the long run. The sum of his teaching is

[1] Ant. 583-604. Cp. El. 504-515; Oed. Col. 965, 1450; Ant. 620-624, 855.

[2] Frag. 833 ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ἂν τὰ θεῖα κρυπτόντων θεῶν | μάθοις ἄν, οὐδ' εἰ πάντ' ἐπεξέλθοις σκοπῶν.

[3] Aj. 121. Frag. 535 (Nauck).

[4] Trach. 943. Cp. Oed. Col. 567. Solon's maxim ('call no man happy till his death') is repeated three times by Sophocles, viz. Oed. Tyr. 1527-1530, Trach. 1-3, Frag. 588 (Nauck).

[5] Phil. 1440 τοῦτο δ' ἐννοεῖθ', ὅταν | πορθῆτε γαῖαν, εὐσεβεῖν τὰ πρὸς θεούς. | ὡς τἄλλα πάντα δεύτερ' ἡγεῖται πατὴρ | Ζεύς. Cp. Frag. 97 ψυχὴ γὰρ εὔνους καὶ φρονοῦσα τοὐνδικον | κρείσσων σοφιστοῦ παντός ἐστιν εὑρετίς.

contained in the words of warning which Athene addresses to Odysseus, after showing him the results of impiety and presumption in the case of Ajax. 'Wherefore,' she adds, 'speak no words of insolence against the gods, nor boast thyself, if thou excellest in strength of hand or store of riches. One day suffices to cast down and raise up all human prosperity; and the gods love the sober-minded, and hate evil-doers[1].'

Too much has perhaps been made of the supposed pessimism of Sophocles. It is true that in several passages human life is described in gloomy language. Ajax in his despair exclaims that 'every day only brings us nearer to death[2],' and the chorus lament that 'life is but a shadow, and that a man no sooner seems to be happy than he falls away[3].' Elsewhere they declare their conviction that 'it is best not to be born, and that after birth the next best by far is that a man with all speed should go to the place from whence he came[4].' These and similar reflexions, however, need not be supposed to have more than a dramatic significance. In the places where they occur they are the natural utterances of sorrow in the face of some great calamity. But it is a mistake to remove them from their context, and to quote them in succession, as representing the philosophy of Sophocles. His plays, in the general impression which they produce, are not of this despondent character; in spite of their tragic contents they are distinguished by a certain brightness of tone. Modern tragedies on the same subject, such as the Oedipe of Voltaire, and the Oreste of Alfieri, are far more sombre and depressing. Sophocles, as we know, was cheerful and tranquil in his life, and the tendency of his dramas is in the same direction, and suggests a natural and healthy delight in human existence and in the outward facts of nature. Antigone lays down her life, not as a burden from which she is glad to be released, but as a bright and joyful possession, and gazes with sorrow on 'the sacred light of the sun' which she is never to behold any more[5]. Even Ajax, in his state of

[1] Aj. 127–133.
[2] Ibid. 473.
[3] Oed. Tyr. 1186–1192.
[4] Oed. Col. 1215 foll.
[5] Ant. 878–880, 916–918.

desperation, parts with regret from 'the splendour of the shining day,' and from the 'rivers and plains of Ilion which have given him nourishment[1].'

As regards the state of the dead, and life beyond the grave, Sophocles merely reproduces the indistinct conceptions of the popular belief. Human beings still retain a kind of existence after death, and possess the same physical features as before. Thus Oedipus, having been blind on earth, will be blind in Hades[2]. But their life is dim and shadowy, they 'feel no pain,' and 'grief touches them no more[3].' Their only passion is the desire for vengeance, and the influence which they can exert upon the living is directed towards this sole object[4]. In addition to these popular notions Sophocles mentions, in one fragment, the Orphic doctrine of the future happiness of the soul[5]. But his references to the state beyond the grave are slight and infrequent; Antigone, for example, when going to her death, thinks more of what she is leaving behind her than of any cheerful prospect for the future. In fact, there is nothing in the plays of Sophocles to suggest that he had any deep or permanent conviction on the question of immortality.

§ 8. *The Irony of Sophocles.*

The use of 'tragic irony,' as it has been called, is a favourite device in all dramatic literature. It is mostly employed when some catastrophe is about to happen, which is known and foreseen by the spectators, but concealed either from all, or from some, of the actors in the drama. In such cases the dialogue may be couched in terms which, though perfectly

[1] Aj. 856-865.

[2] Ant. 73-75, 897-899. El. 443. Oed. Tyr. 1371-1374.

[3] El. 1170 *τοὺς γὰρ θανόντας οὐχ ὁρῶ λυπουμένους.* Oed. Col. 955 *θανόντων δ' οὐδὲν ἄλγος ἅπτεται.* Trach. 1173 *τοῖς γὰρ θανοῦσι μόχθος οὐ προσγίγνεται.*

[4] Thus Agamemnon sends the bodeful dream to Clytaemnestra (El. 459). The dead still live beneath the earth, and drain the blood of their murderers in retribution (*ζῶσιν οἱ γᾶς ὑπαὶ κείμενοι· | παλίρρυτον γὰρ αἷμ' ὑπεξαιροῦσι τῶν | κτανόντων οἱ πάλαι θανόντες,* El. 1419-1421). Cp. Trach. 1201 *εἰ δὲ μή, μενῶ σ' ἐγὼ | καὶ νέρθεν ὢν ἀραῖος εἰσαεὶ βαρύς.*

[5] Frag. 753 *ὡς τρὶς ὄλβιοι | κεῖνοι βροτῶν, οἱ ταῦτα δερχθέντες τέλη | μόλωσ' ἐς Ἅιδου· τοῖσδε γὰρ μόνοις ἐκεῖ | ζῆν ἔστι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοισι πάντ' ἐκεῖ κακά.*

harmless upon the surface, carry an ominous significance to the initiated, and point suggestively to what is about to happen; and the contrast between the outer and the inner meaning of the language produces a deep effect upon the stage. Examples of this 'irony' are to be found in most tragic writers, but especially in those of Greece, who use it with far greater frequency than the moderns; the reason being that, as the subjects of Greek tragedy were taken from the old legends with which every one was familiar, it was far easier for the ancient dramatist to indulge in those ambiguous allusions which presuppose a certain knowledge on the part of the spectators. Sophocles, however, is distinguished even among the Greek poets for his predilection for this form of speech, and his 'irony' has become proverbial. It figures so prominently in his dramas, and goes so far to determine their general tone, that a detailed consideration of the matter will not be out of place[1].

Tragic irony may be divided into two kinds, the conscious and the unconscious. Conscious irony occurs in those cases where the speaker is not himself the victim of any illusion, but foresees the calamity that is about to fall on others, and exults in the prospect. His language, though equivocal, is easily intelligible to the audience, and to those actors who are acquainted with the facts; and its dark humour adds to the horror of the situation. This kind of irony is the one more commonly met with in the modern drama. Thus De Flores, in the Changeling, when showing Alonzo over the castle where he is about to murder him, remarks grimly,

> 'All this is nothing: you shall see anon
> A place you little dream on[2].'

And Lady Macbeth, referring to Duncan's visit, observes that he 'must be provided for[3].' It also occurs very frequently in Aeschylus and Euripides. It is continually present, for instance, in that scene where Clytaemnestra welcomes back her

[1] See Thirlwall's article on the Irony of Sophocles, in the Philological Museum, vol. ii. p. 483 foll.

[2] Middleton's Changeling, Act 3, Sc. 2.

[3] Macbeth, Act 1, Sc. 5.

husband to the palace where the assassins are in wait for him, and bids 'the path be strewn with purple, that Justice may lead him to a house he never hoped to see[1].' It is likewise used with splendid effect in the Bacchae, where Dionysus, having smitten Pentheus with delusion, leads him forth to his destruction, and tells him that 'although his former thoughts were foolish, he is now as wise as he deserves to be,' and that he will return, not on foot, but 'carried back' in triumph, a 'conspicuous spectacle' for all men[2].

But in Sophocles the examples of such irony are far more numerous and more subtle than in the other poets, his love of intricate and allusive phraseology causing him to take especial delight in these ambiguities. Ajax, when he has once resolved upon self-destruction, continues in speech after speech to beguile his wife and the chorus by the sinister obscurity of his language, inducing them to believe that he will soon be 'delivered from all evil[3].' And in the Electra, when Clytaemnestra has been slain, and Aegisthus comes hastening back in triumph to the palace, thinking that the corpse is that of his enemy Orestes, the dialogue which ensues between himself and Electra is one long series of bitter equivocations, of which he alone fails to perceive the significance[4].

The other kind of irony, the unconscious, is perhaps the more impressive of the two. Here the sufferer is himself the spokesman. Utterly blind as to the doom which overhangs him, he uses words which, to the mind of the audience, have an ominous suggestiveness, and without knowing it probes his own wounds to the bottom. Such irony is not confined merely

[1] Agam. 910–913 εὐθὺς γενέσθω πορφυρόστρωτος πόρος | ἐς δῶμ' ἄελπτον ὡς ἂν ἡγῆται δίκη. | τὰ δ' ἄλλα φροντὶς οὐχ ὕπνῳ νικωμένη | θήσει δικαίως σὺν θεοῖς εἱμαρμένα. Cp. 973, 974 Ζεῦ Ζεῦ τέλειε, τὰς ἐμὰς εὐχὰς τέλει· | μέλοι δέ τοι σοὶ τῶνπερ ἂν μέλλῃς τελεῖν.

[2] Bacch. 947–972 . . . τὰς δὲ πρὶν φρένας | οὐκ εἶχες ὑγιεῖς, νῦν δ' ἔχεις οἵας σε δεῖ . . . κρύψει σὺ κρύψιν ἥν σε κρυφθῆναι χρεών . . . λήψει δ' ἴσως σφᾶς, ἣν σὺ μὴ λήφθῃς πάρος . . . δεινὸς σὺ δεινὸς κἀπὶ δεῖν' ἔρχει πάθη κ.τ.λ.

[3] E. g. Aj. 657–659 μολόν τε χῶρον ἔνθ' ἂν ἀστιβῆ κίχω | κρύψω τόδ' ἔγχος τοὐμόν, ἔχθιστον βελῶν, | γαίας ὀρύξας ἔνθα μή τις ὄψεται. 691, 692 ὑμεῖς δ' ἃ φράζω δρᾶτε, καὶ τάχ' ἄν μ' ἴσως | πύθοισθε, κεἰ νῦν δυστυχῶ, σεσωσμένον.

[4] El. 1448–1457. Cp. also Ibid. 1103–1105, 1323–1325; Phil. 779–781.

to the language, but runs through the whole situation; and the contrast between the cheerful heedlessness of the victim, and the dark shadows which surround him, produces an impression more terrible than that which any form of speech could convey. Scenes of this kind had a peculiar fascination for the ancients. The fear of a sudden reverse of fortune, and of some fatal Nemesis which waits upon pride and boastfulness, was of all ideas the one most deeply impressed upon the mind of antiquity. Hence the popularity upon the stage of those thrilling spectacles, in which confidence and presumption were seen advancing blindfold to destruction, and the bitterness of the doom was intensified by the unconscious utterances of the victim.

In the modern drama this species of irony is not very frequent, nor does it occur in Aeschylus. Euripides at times makes a powerful use of it, as in the Bacchae, where Agave, flushed with triumph, and holding aloft the head of her murdered son Pentheus, boasts of her success in the chase, and of her good fortune in having been the first to strike down the prey[1]. But no one has ever approached Sophocles in the tragic force and intensity with which he employs this particular form of ironical diction; no one has ever painted the blindness and shortsightedness of human nature with equal power. It is to this cause that the opening scene of the Ajax owes its peculiar pathos. Ajax is there seen standing in the midst of the mangled bodies of sheep and oxen, and exulting in the vengeance which he supposes he has taken upon the persons of his enemies. He promises Athene that he will 'deck her shrine with golden spoils in return for this glorious raid'; he rejoices in the thought of the torture that he is going to inflict upon Odysseus; and finally he implores the goddess that she will 'never cease to assist him in like manner,' and returns, as he thinks, to the work of vengeance[2].

It is not, however, merely in occasional scenes and episodes

[1] Bacch. 1169–1259.

[2] Aj. 91–117 ὦ χαῖρ' Ἀθάνα, χαῖρε Διογενὲς τέκνον, | ὡς εὖ παρέστης· καί σε παγχρύσοις ἐγὼ | στέψω λαφύροις τῆσδε τῆς ἄγρας χάριν . . . χωρῶ πρὸς ἔργον· σοὶ δ' ἐφίεμαι, θεά, | τοιάνδ' ἀεί μοι σύμμαχον παρεστάναι.

that Sophocles introduces such instances of self-deception and of unconscious irony. He makes it the ruling motive of whole dramas, as in the Trachiniae and the Oedipus Rex. In the Trachiniae the chief significance of the plot lies in the contrast between appearance and reality—between the bright anticipations of Deianeira, and the disastrous conclusion which the audience foresee; and the pathos of the situation is intensified, from first to last, by the utterances of the heroine, who is continually letting fall expressions ominously appropriate to her condition[1]. But the greatest example of all is the Oedipus Rex, the masterpiece of Sophocles, and the most typical of all Greek tragedies. The irony of destiny is here exhibited with unexampled force. In the opening scene Oedipus is depicted in the height of his prosperity, renowned and venerated, and surrounded by his suppliant countrymen; and the priest addresses him as the 'wisest of men in dealing with life's chances and with the visitations of heaven[2].' To the audience who know that within a few short hours the wrath of heaven will have crushed and shattered him, the pathetic meaning of these words is indescribable. From this first scene until the final catastrophe the speeches of Oedipus are all full of the same tragic allusiveness. He can scarcely open his lips without touching unconsciously on his own approaching fate. When he insists upon the fact that his search for the assassin is 'not on behalf of strangers, but in his own cause,' and when he cautiously warns Jocasta that, as his mother still lives, the guilt of incest is not yet an impossibility, every word that he utters has a concealed barb[3]. Perhaps the most tragic passage of all is that in which, while cursing the murderer of Laius, he pronounces his own doom. 'As for the man who did the deed of guilt, whether alone he lurks, or in league with

[1] E.g. Trach. 492–496 ἀλλ' εἴσω στέγης | χωρῶμεν, ὡς λόγων τ' ἐπιστολὰς φέρῃς, | ἃ τ' ἀντὶ δώρων δῶρα χρὴ προσαρμόσαι, | καὶ ταῦτ' ἄγῃς· κενὸν γὰρ οὐ δίκαιά σε | χωρεῖν προσελθόντ' ὧδε σὺν πολλῷ στόλῳ. 575–577 ἔσται φρενός σοι τοῦτο κηλητήριον | τῆς Ἡρακλείας, ὥστε μήτιν' εἰσιδὼν | στέρξει γυναῖκα κεῖνος ἀντὶ σοῦ πλέον. 612 στελεῖν χιτῶνι τῷδε, καὶ φανεῖν θεοῖς | θυτῆρα καινῷ καινὸν ἐν πεπλώματι. Cp. also 303–305, 618–619.

[2] Oed. Tyr. 33–34.

[3] Ibid. 137–141, 980–986.

others, I pray that he may waste his life away in suffering, perishing vilely for his vile actions. And if he should become a dweller in my house, I knowing it, may every curse I utter fall on my own head[1].'

§ 9. *The Extant Tragedies.*

In the case of Sophocles, as well as in that of Aeschylus, the preservation of the extant tragedies was not the result of chance, but of the deliberate choice of the grammarians. At an early period seven plays were selected from the rest for purposes of study and general reading, and it is these seven which still survive[2]. Later on, during the Byzantine epoch, the number of select dramas was further reduced to three—the Ajax, Electra, and Oedipus Rex—and these three were the plays chiefly read and commented upon by the scholars of Constantinople[3]. But the remaining four were never entirely neglected, like the remaining four of Aeschylus; and for this reason the text of Sophocles, as a whole, is preserved in better condition than that of Aeschylus, and the manuscripts are much more numerous[4].

The seven plays appear to have been chosen with taste and judgement. Though they are less instructive than those of Aeschylus, in the light which they throw upon the gradual evolution of the drama, yet as far as intrinsic excellence is concerned, there can be no doubt that they include the finest productions of Sophocles. The Oedipus Rex is everywhere treated by Aristotle as the perfection of Greek tragedy[5]. The same play, together with the Oedipus Coloneus, the Electra, and the Antigone, are cited by the poets of the Anthology

[1] Oed. Tyr. 246–251.

[2] See above, p. 100.

[3] The old scholia on these three plays were expanded by the later Byzantine scholars, such as Thomas Magister, into bulky commentaries. The old scholia of the other four plays were left with slight additions. Dindorf, Praef. ad Schol. Soph. vol. ii.

[4] None of the scholia to the plays of Sophocles were untouched by the Byzantines, as was the case with the Supplices and Choephori of Aeschylus. Dindorf, Praef. ad Schol. Aesch.

[5] Aristot. Poet. cc. 9, 11, 13, 15, 24. In c. 26 the Oedipus of Sophocles is compared with the Iliad of Homer, as types of epic and tragic poetry respectively.

as the masterpieces of Sophoclean art; and their opinion is confirmed by the criticisms of the old scholiasts[1]. These four dramas were likewise the most popular upon the Attic stage, and supplied the great actors of the Alexandrian period with their favourite roles[2]. The remaining three—the Ajax, Trachiniae, and Philoctetes—though less frequently noticed and commended, seem nevertheless to have been always considered as tragedies of the very highest rank. The Ajax provided Stobaeus with more quotations than any other play of Sophocles; the Philoctetes aroused the enthusiasm of the critic Dion; and the celebrity of the Trachiniae in ancient times is proved by the excerpts of Cicero[3].

As to the chronology of the seven tragedies, all that has been recorded is that the Philoctetes was produced in 409, and that the Oedipus Coloneus was written shortly before the poet's death, and exhibited for the first time in 401[4]. The date of the other plays is very uncertain, and there are no historical allusions to serve as a guide. Still it is possible, on comparing the different dramas one with another, to distinguish certain varieties in structure and metre, which may help to determine the order of succession at any rate approximately.

One of the most useful tests is afforded by the arrangement of the dialogue. In the older tragedy it was the custom never

[1] Anthol. Pal. 9. 98 *Οἰδίποδες δισσοί σε καὶ Ἠλέκτρη βαρύμηνις . . . ταγὸν ἐπὶ τραγικοῖο κατήνεσσαν θιάσοιο.* Ibid. 7. 37 *ἡ δ' ἐνὶ χερσὶν | κούριμος, ἐκ ποίης ἥδε διδασκαλίης; | εἴτε σοι Ἀντιγόνην εἰπεῖν φίλον, οὐκ ἂν ἁμάρτοις, | εἴτε καὶ Ἠλέκτραν· ἀμφότεραι γὰρ ἄκρον.* Argum. 2 Oed. Tyr. *χαριέντως δὲ τύραννον ἅπαντες αὐτὸν ἐπιγράφουσιν, ὡς ἐξέχοντα πάσης τῆς Σοφοκλέους ποιήσεως.* Argum. 1 Oed. Col. *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τῶν θαυμαστῶν.* Argum. Salust. Oed. Col. *ἄφατος δέ ἐστι καθόλου ἡ οἰκονομία ἐν τῷ δράματι, ὡς οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ σχεδόν.* Argum. Ant. *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τῶν καλλίστων Σοφοκλέους.*

[2] Thus the celebrated Polus is said to have been equally successful as Oedipus both in the Oedipus Tyrannus and the Oedipus Coloneus (Stob. Flor. p. 522). The impression he once made, shortly after his son's death, in the part of Electra is well known (Gell. N. A. 7. 5). The Antigone, as Demosthenes tells us, was 'frequently reproduced' by Theodorus and Aristodemus (Dem. Fals. Leg. § 246).

[3] Dion Chrysost. or. 52. Cic. Tusc. 2. 8. That the Ajax was a favourite on the stage is shown by the fact that the actor Timotheus of Zacynthus derived his nick-name (*ὁ σφαγεύς*) from the success with which he acted the suicide of the hero (Schol. Aj. 864).

[4] Argum. Phil. and Oed. Col. Val. Max. 8. 7. 2.

to divide an iambic verse between two or more speakers[1]; but in course of time this rule was disregarded. The plays of Sophocles show a growing laxity in regard to these divisions. In the Antigone they are never found at all, in the Ajax and Trachiniae very seldom; but in the other plays they occur more frequently, and especially in the two latest, the Philoctetes and the Oedipus Coloneus[2]. Another criterion is supplied by the increasing use of the third actor, scenes in which all three performers join simultaneously in the dialogue being less common in the Antigone, Ajax, and Trachiniae than in the other four tragedies[3]. Thirdly, the metre is of some value as a source of evidence. Thus the Ajax contains a 'parodus' of the old-fashioned anapaestic type; and in the Antigone anapaests are employed, after the ancient manner, to introduce fresh characters[4]. In the Antigone, also, the structure of the iambic verse is more formal and stately than in the other plays[5].

From these various pieces of evidence, when taken together, the following conclusions may be drawn. It seems certain that the Antigone and the Ajax are the two earliest of the seven plays, though their relative date cannot be decided. The Trachiniae apparently came next. The Philoctetes and the Oedipus Coloneus are known to have been the latest. The Electra and the Oedipus Rex were most likely composed in

[1] There are only two examples of the practice in Aeschylus, viz. Septem 217, Prom. 980.

[2] The number of instances in the different plays is as follows:—Ant. 0, Trach. 4, Aj. 8, Oed. Tyr. 12, El. 27, Phil. 32, Oed. Col. 50.

[3] The number of such scenes is as follows:—Ant. 1, Trach. 2, Aj. 2, El. 3, Oed. Tyr. 4, Phil. 4, Oed. Col. 6.

[4] Ant. 155–162, 376–383, 526–530, 626–630. Moreover, in the Antigone, though the parodus is of the later kind, a system of anapaests is inserted in the middle.

[5] The difference, as regards smoothness of versification, between the separate plays of Sophocles is not very striking. The proportion of trisyllabic feet (tribrachs, dactyls, and anapaests) to each 100 lines of iambics is as follows—El. 4. 20, Ant. 4. 36, Oed. Col. 5. 79, Oed. Tyr. 6. 37, Trach. 6. 93, Aj. 7. 15, Phil. 11. 24. The Antigone, however, though its proportion of trisyllabic feet is not unusually small, is distinguished from the other plays by the fact that there is no example of an anapaest in the first foot of a line. The Oedipus Coloneus, though later in date than the Philoctetes, is much smoother in its versification. But this fact is probably due to the difference in tone between the rapid dialogue of the Philoctetes and the serene tranquillity of the Oedipus Coloneus.

the interval between the Trachiniae and the Philoctetes, but there are no means of fixing the exact period. Any further points which deserve notice, in reference to this subject, will be considered in connexion with the individual plays.

(1) *The Antigone.*

According to an ancient tradition the election of Sophocles as one of the generals in the Samian expedition was due to the success of his Antigone[1]. This account, if true, would fix the date of the play as the spring of 441 or 442[2]. But though an election on these grounds was not impossible, especially among the Athenians, yet the whole story is of a dubious character, and was probably invented by some critic who wished to establish a connexion between the military and the poetical career of Sophocles. It bears a suspicious resemblance to the tale about the poet Phrynichus, whom the biographers appear to have first confused with the general of the same name, and whose election to the generalship they then proceeded to account for by the excellence of the 'war-dance' in one of his tragedies[3]. It may, indeed, be urged that even if the story is false, it proves at any rate the close connexion in point of date between the Antigone and the Samian expedition[4]. But the Greek writers were often so reckless of chronology, when producing an interesting anecdote, that not much stress can be laid on this conclusion[5].

[1] Arg. 1 Ant. *φασὶ δὲ τὸν Σοφοκλέα ἠξιῶσθαι τῆς ἐν Σάμῳ στρατηγίας εὐδοκιμήσαντα ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῆς Ἀντιγόνης.*

[2] As the expedition was despatched early in 440 (Curtius, Gk. History, ii. 472, English transl.), the generals must have been chosen in May of 441, the regular date for the annual election. Hence the Antigone could hardly have been brought out earlier than the spring of 441 or 442.

[3] Aelian, Var. Hist. 3. 8.

[4] See Prof. Jebb, Introd. to Antigone, p. xlix.

[5] Thus some commentators ascribed the death of Sophocles to excessive joy at the success of this same Antigone, in spite of the obvious anachronism (vita Soph. p. 5, Dindf.).

In the same way the retirement of Aeschylus from Athens was described by many biographers as a punishment inflicted on account of the terror caused by his Eumenides, in spite of the fact that the Eumenides was produced nearly twenty years after his first visit to Sicily (vita Aesch. p. 4).

Again, according to Diog. Laert. 2. 44, some of the lines in the Palamedes

As regards the order of its production, the Antigone stood thirty-second among the plays of Sophocles[1]. Now if we could be certain that his dramas were all exhibited at the City Dionysia, in groups of four, it would follow that the Antigone must have been the last of its own particular group, and must have taken the place of the ordinary satyric play. This inference, however, fails to take account of the fact that Sophocles may have occasionally competed at the Lenaea, where the regulation concerning the number of dramas was not the same[2].

The subject of the tragedy—the prohibition of the burial by Creon, and the self-sacrifice of Antigone—is not found in any author before the time of Aeschylus, and appears to be inconsistent with the accounts of the Argive invasion given by several other writers[3]. It may possibly, therefore, be an Attic invention, designed with the purpose of glorifying the Athenians, by whose humanity the Argive chieftains were eventually buried. It is used by Aeschylus merely as an episode, at the conclusion of his great Theban trilogy. Sophocles was apparently the first to write a whole play on the subject, and his example was afterwards followed by Euripides, whose Antigone, however, seems to have been of a more domestic type[4]. As

of Euripides were intended as a rebuke to the Athenians for their condemnation of Socrates. Yet Socrates was put to death in 399 B. C., while the Palamedes was produced in 415 (Aelian, Var. Hist. 2. 8). Moreover Euripides died many years before Socrates. Yet this does not prevent Diogenes Laertius from adopting the story, although he knew that the anachronism had been pointed out by Philochorus (Diog. Laert. l. c.).

[1] Argum. 1 Ant. λέλεκται δὲ τὸ δρᾶμα τοῦτο τριακοστὸν δεύτερον. The order here mentioned must apparently be chronological. It cannot be alphabetical, and it is difficult to suppose that it refers to some mere casual arrangement.

If we could be sure that the Antigone was produced in 441, then the fact that it was only the thirty-second of his dramas would lead to the interesting conclusion that he was far more prolific in the latter part of his career than in the former. The total number of his plays being at least about 110, the result would be that in the first twenty-seven years of his dramatic career he produced only thirty-two, while in the last thirty-five he produced seventy-eight. But the date of the Antigone, as we have seen, is far from certain.

[2] See Attic Theatre, p. 38. As regards the exhibition of plays by Sophocles at the Lenaea, see above, p. 128.

[3] Pind. Ol. 6. 15. Paus. 9. 18. 3. See Jebb's Introduction, p. i.

[4] That the Antigone of Euripides was written *after* that of Sophocles appears to be proved by frag. 165 ἀκουσον·

far as can be judged from the scanty notices, the love interest, in Euripides, was brought into much greater prominence. Antigone was discovered in the act of burying the body with the aid of Haemon, and the play ended happily with the marriage of the two lovers, and with a prediction, by some god, of the heroine's future fortunes[1].

The Antigone has always been one of the most popular of Greek tragedies. Though the incident on which the plot is based—the resolution of Antigone to surrender her life rather than leave her brother's corpse unburied—appeals less forcibly to modern than to ancient sentiment, yet the general motive of the play, the conflict between human law and the individual conscience, is one of deep and universal significance. Various doubts have been raised as to the moral purpose of the composition. Should Antigone, it is asked, be regarded as an innocent victim to the force of circumstances? Or is the balance of guilt more evenly divided, and are Creon and Antigone both deserving of punishment, the one for his contempt for the divine laws, the other for her defiance of established order? As to this latter view, it is difficult to see how it could ever have been maintained, except by those whose minds were biassed by preconceived opinions concerning the proper functions of tragedy. The whole tone of the play is against it. From first to last our sympathies are enlisted on the side of Antigone, and in favour of the conviction that human ordinances must give way to the divine promptings of the conscience. No doubt the chorus are somewhat wavering in their judgement, and without actually approving Creon's decree, nevertheless rebuke Antigone for her contumacy[2]. But this vacillation is not unnatural in a chorus of the Sophoclean kind, and makes the isolated greatness of Antigone all the more impressive. More-

οὐ γὰρ οἱ κακῶς πεπραγότες | σὺν ταῖς τύχαισι τοὺς λόγους ἀπώλεσαν, which evidently refers to Soph. Ant. 563 *οὐδ' ὃς ἂν βλάστῃ μένει | νοῦς τοῖς κακῶς πράσσουσιν, ἀλλ' ἐξίσταται.*

[1] Arg. 1 Ant. *κεῖται ἡ μυθοποιία καὶ παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ ἐν Ἀντιγόνῃ· πλὴν ἐκεῖ φωραθεῖσα μετὰ τοῦ Αἵμονος δίδοται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν καὶ τέκνον τίκτει τὸν Αἵμονα.* Adscript. in L, *διαφέρει τῆς Εὐριπίδου Ἀντιγόνης αὕτη, ὅτι φωραθεῖσα ἐκείνη διὰ τὸν Αἵμονος ἔρωτα ἐξεδόθη πρὸς γάμον, ἐνταῦθα δὲ τοὐναντίον.*

[2] Ant. 853-856, 872-875.

over even the chorus, towards the end of the play, begin to see more clearly into the truth, and inform Creon that he is the cause of his own misfortunes, and that 'reverence for the gods must be preserved inviolate[1].' And Creon's anxious reflexion, just before the catastrophe, that 'perhaps it is best to keep the laws of heaven,' is a clear indication of the poet's intention[2]. Antigone is one of those guiltless victims, whom Sophocles often makes the subject of his tragedies; and it was no part of his creed to show that the course of events on earth is always regulated by strict justice.

The character of Antigone is one of extreme beauty. Though she resembles Electra in unconquerable force of will, yet the cause of her actions—her deep and undying affection for her kindred—is a more attractive motive than Electra's craving for vengeance; and the stern grandeur of her disposition is relieved and softened by numerous little touches of a gentler kind. There is only one flaw in the picture. In her final speech she makes the startling assertion that no one but a brother could have moved her to such self-sacrifice. As for husband or children, she would have let them remain unburied. Why? Because she might have had another husband, and other children; but her parents being dead, she could never have a second brother[3]. This frigid and sophistical piece of reasoning has been condemned by every critic, and is unworthy of Antigone's character and previous declarations. From the aesthetic point of view it is indefensible; and the lines must be regarded, either as an interpolation[4], or as an unexpected bathos on the part of Sophocles[5].

[1] Ant. 1257–1260, 1349–1350.

[2] Ibid. 1113–1114.

[3] Ibid. 904–912.

[4] The lines are quoted by Aristotle (Rhet. 3. 16), and were evidently considered genuine in his time. It is suggested that they may have been interpolated by Iophon in some reproduction of the Antigone. Cp. Cramer, Anecd. Oxon. 4, p. 315 πολλὰ γὰρ νοθευόμενά ἐστιν, ὡς ἡ Σοφοκλέους Ἀντιγόνη· λέγεται γὰρ εἶναι Ἀντιφῶντα (conj. Ἰοφῶντος) τοῦ Σοφοκλέους υἱοῦ—a tradition which possibly arose from a reproduction of the Antigone under the name of Iophon. As to the language of the lines, certain anomalies are pointed out by Prof. Jebb in his notes on 909–912.

[5] This tendency to bathos in Sophocles is noticed by more than one of the ancient critics, and though not very apparent in his extant tragedies, may

(2) *The Ajax.*

The moral of this play is the necessity of moderation in the midst of success. Ajax is a man of heroic strength and valour, but his character is disfigured by arrogance and impiety. He disdains the assistance of heaven, exclaims that 'any coward could win victories with the help of the gods,' and when Athene comes to encourage him in battle, bids her go elsewhere, since he has no need of her presence[1]. Hence he falls a victim to the powers he despised, and is crushed in the very moment of his supposed triumph. The lesson is further enforced by the character of Odysseus, who exhibits in perfection those identical qualities of sobriety and wariness in which Ajax was deficient. He shrinks from witnessing the fall even of his enemy, and remembering that he will one day need burial himself, is unwilling to refuse it to others[2]. At the same time his cold selfishness is somewhat repellent, and attracts our sympathy towards the more generous-minded hero of the play.

The plot must have been taken mainly from the two lost epics of the Trojan Cycle, the Aethiopis and the Little Iliad[3]. But in one respect Sophocles has deviated from his authorities, and ascribes the defeat of Ajax, in the contest for the arms, not to the testimony of the Trojans, but to the intrigues of the Atreidae[4], his object being plainly to provide some better excuse for the furious resentment and violence of Ajax.

The same subject was also treated by Aeschylus in his

have been exemplified more frequently in some of the less celebrated dramas. Cp. Dion. Hal., Vett. Script. Cens. 2. 11 *καὶ πολλάκις ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ μεγέθους εἰς διάκενον κόμπον ἐκπίπτων οἷον εἰς ἰδιωτικὴν παντάπασι ταπεινότητα κατέρχεται.* Longinus, de Sublim. c. 33 *ὁ δὲ Πίνδαρος καὶ ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ὅτὲ μὲν οἷον πάντα ἐπιφλέγουσι τῇ φορᾷ, σβέννυνται δ' ἀλόγως πολλάκις καὶ πίπτουσιν ἀτυχέστατα.* Plut., Rect. Rat. Aud. c. 13 *μέμψαιτο δ' ἄν τις . . . τοῦ Σοφοκλέους τὴν ἀνωμαλίαν.*

[1] Aj. 767, 770–775.

[2] Aj. 121–126, 1365.

[3] Both of these epics contained an account of the contest for the arms, and the fate of Ajax (Proclus, Chrestomathia, pp. 479 and 481 in Gaisford's Hephaestion).

[4] In the Aethiopis the contest was settled by an appeal to the Trojan captives: in the Little Iliad it was decided by the report of a conversation between two Trojan maidens, which had been overheard by the Greek scouts (Schneidewin's Introd. to Ajax, pp. 40 and 41).

Thracian Captives[1]; but in this play the suicide was merely reported to the spectators, and not exhibited upon the stage. Sophocles has made a bold departure from the usual Greek custom, in presenting to the eyes of the audience the spectacle of a violent death. The only other example of such realism in Greek tragedy is to be found in the Supplices of Euripides, where Evadne throws herself down from a rock on to her husband's funeral pile. It is possible, as the scholiast suggests, that Sophocles, in this case, was partially influenced by the desire not to follow too closely on the lines laid down by his predecessor[2]. But whatever his motive may have been, the result is a scene of the greatest pathos. The dying speech of Ajax, with its pensive sadness of tone, goes direct to the heart. There is no strained and unnatural bravado in his words, and at the same time no weakness. Though he parts from the light of day with sorrow, yet he never flinches in his purpose; all traces of that frenzy which had been his ruin have disappeared; he is restored at length, in the last scene of all, to his right mind, and his final utterances are strong, calm, and majestic.

The play, in addition to its other qualities, had a local interest for the Athenians. Ajax was one of their national heroes, whose name was borne by an Attic tribe, and from whom many distinguished Athenian families traced their origin[3]. This local connexion is gracefully emphasised in several places; and the dying apostrophe of Ajax to the 'holy plains of Salamis,' and to 'famous Athens, and the people that dwell therein,' would have a peculiarly touching effect when spoken in the open theatre, from which the buildings of Athens, and the sea-girt isle of Salamis, were easily visible[4].

The construction of the Ajax varies in point of merit. In the first part of the play the preparation for the crisis is admirably contrived; and the deception of Tecmessa and the chorus, and their extravagant joy at the hero's supposed recovery, intensify the effect of the catastrophe which immediately follows. But

[1] See the fragments of the Θρῆσσαι in Nauck's Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 27.

[2] Schol. Soph. Aj. 815.

[3] Herod. 6. 35. Plat. Alcib. 121 B. The name of the tribe was Αἰαντίς.

[4] Aj. 859–861, 1218–1222.

after the death of Ajax, as the scholiast pointed out, there is an end of the tragic interest; and the final scenes, with their protracted wrangling over the disposal of the body, are frigid by comparison[1]. No doubt the subject of burial was one of supreme importance to the ancients; but this fact hardly justifies the excessive length of the concluding dialogues. Nor can it be contended that their object was to rehabilitate the character of the national hero, which had been exhibited in a dishonourable light at the beginning of the play, by giving Teucer an opportunity of extolling his achievements. The reputation of Ajax had already been sufficiently redeemed by the impressive dignity of his final appearance.

It is simpler to suppose, with the scholiast, that as the subject of the tragedy was deficient in incident, Sophocles chose to fill it out to the necessary length with one of those rhetorical contests in which the ancients delighted. At the same time the debate was one which would gratify the national pride of the Athenians. Teucer, who might be regarded as the representative of Athens, was seen maintaining a successful contest with the two great heroes of the Peloponnesus; and his invectives against Spartan arrogance would be certain to rouse the enthusiasm of an Athenian audience[2]. But it must be admitted that scenes of this kind, though effective upon the stage, fall below the usual level of Sophoclean tragedy.

(3) *The Trachiniae.*

The Trachiniae has not as a rule found much favour with the critics. It has been censured as feeble and deficient in passion; and Schlegel has even gone so far as to express a hope that, for the sake of Sophocles, it might be proved to be spurious[3]. But to the ordinary reader, if not the most impressive, it is perhaps the most delightful, of all the plays of Sophocles, on account of its tenderness and gentle pathos. Its evil reputation seems to

[1] Schol. Aj. 1123 *τοιαῦτα σοφίσματα οὐκ οἰκεῖα τραγῳδίας· μετὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀναίρεσιν ἐπεκτεῖναι τὸ δρᾶμα θελήσας ἐψυχρεύσατο καὶ ἔλυσε τὸ τραγικὸν πάθος.*

[2] E.g. 1102 *Σπάρτης ἀνάσσων ἦλθες, οὐχ ἡμῶν κρατῶν κ. τ. λ.*

[3] Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art, p. 109 (English transl.).

have been largely due to a mistaken comparison with Euripides. The critics appear to have supposed that the aim of Sophocles was to emulate the Hippolytus and the Medea, and to exhibit, in Deianeira, a picture of a woman maddened by love and jealousy. Such is the Deianeira of Ovid and Seneca[1]. She thirsts for the blood of her rival Iole, raves against her husband, and is distracted by the conflict of her passions. But to compare the heroine of Sophocles with a woman of this type is to misinterpret his intention. His desire was to portray, in Deianeira's character, the gentleness and patient devotion of womanhood; and though her submissiveness may perhaps seem in some cases to have been carried to excess, no one can deny the charm and truthfulness of the representation.

As to the date of the Trachiniae the most diverse views have been expressed. Those who regard it as a bad play ascribe its defects to the inexperience of youth, or to the decaying powers of old age. But opinions based on these grounds are of slight significance. Nor can any importance be attached to the supposed imitations of Euripides, as an indication of date. The opening speech of Deianeira, as was long since pointed out, is not a mere reproduction of the Euripidean prologue; it is spoken in conversation with the nurse, instead of being addressed to the spectators, and the desultory narrative which it contains is natural and appropriate under the circumstances[2]. In the same way the coincidences of expression with the Hercules Furens and Supplices of Euripides are of little use as evidence, since it is uncertain whether Sophocles was borrowing from Euripides, or whether the reverse was the case[3]. In favour of an early date are the facts already mentioned—the sparing use of the third actor, and the infrequency of divisions in the iambic verse. Moreover, the unusual prevalence of narrative speeches, and the disregard of the unity of time, are more in the style of the primitive drama[4]. On the other hand

[1] See Seneca's Hercules; and Ovid, Met. 9. 134 foll., Heroid. 9.

[2] See Patin, Sophocle, p. 66.

[3] Compare Trach. 1101 with Herc. Fur. 1353; Trach. 416 with Suppl. 567.

[4] There are no less than six narrative speeches in the play, viz. 248–290, 531–587, 672–722, 749–812, 899–946, 1046–

the soft and tender grace with which the characters are drawn recalls the tone of the latest tragedies—the Philoctetes and the Oedipus Coloneus[1]. On the whole, therefore, the question of date must be regarded as somewhat uncertain.

The plot of the Trachiniae is clear and simple, like all the plots of Sophocles, and deals with a single subject, the jealous fears of Deianeira and their consequences. But it lacks that artistic unity and symmetry which come from the concentration of interest upon one central personage. The play falls naturally into two portions, Deianeira dominating the first, and Hercules the second; and the transition from the one to the other is not without awkwardness. After our feelings of compassion have been wrought to the highest pitch by the tragic fate and silent exit of Deianeira, the entrance of Hercules, and the subsequent picture of his sufferings, inevitably strike one as an anti-climax. Hence the Trachiniae cannot be classed, in point of structure, among the finest works of Sophocles. But the final scenes are executed with such power and skill as to prevent, as far as possible, any diminution of interest. There is no repetition of similar effects; Hercules is in direct contrast to Deianeira. Sympathy and tenderness have no place in his character. When he is brought on the stage, writhing with torture, his first desire is to get his wife within his grasp, and to crush her to death; and the cautious replies of his son, and the faintest suggestion of disobedience to his will, goad him to madness. Such a spectacle of physical and mental agony excites, it is true, more horror than compassion. But on a sudden everything is changed. When he hears of the fatal wiles of Nessus, the truth flashes across his mind, he recognises the hand of fate, and perceives that the oracles are in the act of fulfilment. His former violence and fury are succeeded by calm and stoical resolution. He gives his final directions to Hyllus, and is then carried away to his death, bidding his soul

1111. On the disregard for the unity of time (the journey of Hyllus from Trachis to Euboea, and his return to Trachis after the death of Hercules, being compressed within the limits of a single day) see above, p. 150.

[1] See Prof. Jebb's Introduction, pp. xlvii–xlix.

'with curb as of steel' repress all lamentation, and meet its fate joyfully[1]. This transition from uncontrollable fury to strong and dignified endurance is all the more pathetic on account of its suddenness, and gives a tragic grandeur to the conclusion of the play.

(4) *The Electra.*

The plot of the Electra has been described in a previous section, where its richness and variety were contrasted with the simplicity of the Choephori[2]. But there is a further point of difference between the two plays. The Choephori is the centre of a trilogy, and its purpose is to pave the way for the great concluding struggle between vengeance and mercy. Hence in Aeschylus the slaughter of Clytaemnestra is perpetrated not without misgivings; and as soon as it is accomplished, the pangs of conscience begin to make themselves felt, and the approaching conflict is already foreshadowed. But the Electra is a tragedy complete in itself, and requires a satisfactory conclusion. Sophocles, therefore, has preferred to recur to the Homeric version of the story, and to depict the murder of Clytaemnestra as a work of righteous retribution, about which there could be no doubt or scruple[3]. It is commanded by the oracle of Apollo, and executed by Orestes with a clear conscience; and it finally cleanses the palace of the Atreidae from its stain of guilt. In consequence, the tone of the two tragedies is different. The Choephori opens with the spectacle of the black-stoled maidens grouped round the tomb of Agamemnon, and the general atmosphere of the play is weird and sombre, as befits a deed of dubious morality. In the Electra, on the other hand, the tomb of Agamemnon is removed from sight; the scene is bright and cheerful, opening with the rising sunshine and the matin songs of birds[4]; and everything seems to portend that the day of deliverance is at hand.

The interest of the play, as was previously observed, centres in the figure of Electra; and her character, as a whole, is

[1] Trach. 1259–1263.
[2] See above, p. 146.
[3] See above, p. 115.
[4] El. 17–19.

a beautiful conception. But it is questionable whether the implacability of her resentment against her mother has not been carried too far, and whether Sophocles, in his desire to preserve a singleness of tone throughout the drama, and to avoid the slightest hint of uncertainty and hesitation, has not gone to the opposite extreme. We should remember, no doubt, the difference between ancient and modern sentiment, vengeance being regarded by the ancients as a duty, while to the moderns it is a vice. We should also remember the provocations which Electra had received. She had seen Aegisthus occupying the throne of her father, and living in adultery with her mother[1]; she had witnessed their sacrifices and thanksgivings on the anniversary of her father's murder[2]; and she knew that her mother had endeavoured to uproot the family of the Atreidae by the slaughter of Orestes, and that she still prayed for his death, and rejoiced when she thought her prayers were fulfilled[3]. But still, even among the ancients, kinship of blood was considered a bar to the most justifiable revenge. The existence of this feeling is proved by the whole course of the Oresteia; and it is no less prominent in Antigone's speech in the Oedipus Coloneus, when she tells her father that it is unlawful for him to exact retribution on a son, whatever his crimes may have been[4]. But Electra, even when her mother's last cries of agony are ringing in her ears, displays nothing but exultation; and such indifference to the ties of blood is unnatural and repelling[5].

(5) *The Oedipus Rex.*

The story of Oedipus, which has supplied Sophocles with the most famous of his tragedies, had already been handled by Aeschylus in the central play of his Theban trilogy[6]. Little is known about this composition; but it was probably as simple in structure as the Septem, with which it was written in connexion, and bore no resemblance to the Oedipus of Sophocles.

[1] El. 266–268, 271–272.
[2] Ibid. 277–281.
[3] Ibid. 296–297, 637–642, 787–790.
[4] Oed. Col. 1189–1191.
[5] El. 1407–1416.
[6] See p. 106.

The aim of Aeschylus, in his three tragedies, was to trace the course of ancestral guilt, and to exhibit the mysterious workings of destiny during successive generations. Hence it may be inferred that, in his treatment of the story, the emphasis was laid, more on the causes and effects of the crime of Oedipus, than on the actual process of its discovery. Sophocles, on the other hand, prefers to concentrate the interest upon a single point of time, and gives a different moral to the legend, converting it into a picture of the blindness and fallibility of mankind. To effect this purpose he devotes the greater part of the play to the gradual discovery of the murder and the incest, and makes Oedipus himself the author of the discovery, and the unconscious agent in his own destruction. It is he who persists in unravelling the fatal secret, in spite of warnings to the contrary, because he thinks it will benefit himself and his neighbours. He catches at each hint, and pursues each clue, with a light and cheerful heart, little dreaming that every step brings him nearer to the precipice; and it is only when he has reached the very brink, and the truth is revealed, that he perceives, when too late, the extent of his previous folly[1].

Aristotle, in his analysis of the tragic art, lays it down as a rule that the plot is of more importance than the characters[2]. This statement is hardly true, as applied to Sophocles, in whose dramas, for the most part, the incidents are subordinate to the pictures of human passion. But Aristotle was possibly led to take this view by his admiration for the Oedipus, which he regarded as a model drama, and in which, for once, the plot is undoubtedly the chief source of interest. Not that it is constructed on modern lines, or that it appeals to our curiosity by dubious and conflicting alternatives. The general result is clear from the first; but the pathos of the drama lies, not so much in the emotions of Oedipus, as in his actions. The course of events is contrived with so much skill, that everything he does has a sinister tendency, and whichever way he turns, he only involves himself closer in the meshes of fate. Nothing

[1] See above, p. 178. [2] Aristot. Poet. c. 6.

can help him; even those who wish to assist him only sink him deeper. Jocasta, in her desire to clear him of the murder of Laius, lets out part of the dire secret by her allusion to the 'triple cross-roads[1].' The herdsman, anxious to relieve him from his fears about Merope, leads up to the horrible discovery of his birth[2]. Such is his destiny throughout the play; and it is this steady and unswerving progress of events towards the final catastrophe which absorbs the attention of the reader, to the exclusion of other interests.

The Oedipus of Euripides was probably written later than that of Sophocles, and appears to have contained several of those innovations upon tradition which the younger poet was sometimes compelled to adopt, in order to avoid repetition. The catastrophe, instead of being concentrated, as in Sophocles, fell in two successive blows. The murder of Laius was discovered first, and Oedipus was deprived of sight, not by his own hands, but by the followers of Laius, in revenge for their master's death. Then came a further calamity in the revelation of the incest[3]. So much may be gathered from the existing fragments; but as to the general character of the tragedy nothing is recorded.

(6) *The Philoctetes.*

The legend of Philoctetes was related at length in the Trojan Cycle[4]. It was also dramatised by each of the three great tragic poets; and although the tragedies of Aeschylus and Euripides have perished, their general character is fairly well known from the criticisms of Dion[5]. It may be interesting, therefore, to describe the various shapes assumed by the story, in the Cycle and in the subsequent dramas, as an illustration of the skill and originality with which the ancient myths were handled.

[1] Oed. Tyr. 715-730.

[2] Ibid. 989 foll.

[3] Schol. Eur. Phoen. 61 *ἐν δὲ τῷ Οἰδίποδι οἱ Λαΐου θεράποντες ἐτύφλωσαν αὐτόν· 'ἡμεῖς δὲ Πολύβου παῖδ' ἐρείσαντες πέδῳ | ἐξομματοῦμεν καὶ διόλλυμεν κόρας.'* Their description of Oedipus as the 'son of Polybus' shows that they were not yet acquainted with the secret about his birth, nor with the incest.

[4] viz. in the Little Iliad of Lesches (Proclus, Chrest. p. 481, in Gaisford's Hephaestion).

[5] Dion Chrysost. or. 52.

In the Cycle the fable was a very simple one. The Greeks had abandoned Philoctetes on the island of Lemnos, because of his incurable wound. But after ten years of fighting they learn from an oracle that they cannot capture Troy, unless he should come to their assistance, and bring with him the deadly bow of Hercules. Diomed is accordingly sent to fetch him, and he consents without hesitation to return to the Greek camp and share in the victory[1].

This simple story was first converted into a dramatic plot by Aeschylus, who represented Philoctetes as embittered by his sufferings, and irreconcilably hostile to the Greeks. Odysseus, therefore, who was sent to recall him, had a dangerous task to perform, since it was certain that, if once recognised, he would be slain by means of the arrows of Hercules. However, he managed to conceal his identity, and won the confidence of Philoctetes by a fictitious story about the disastrous condition of the Greek army[2]. He then, apparently, succeeded in obtaining possession of the bow, and having thus at one stroke secured himself from peril, and deprived Philoctetes of his means of livelihood, he at length made himself known, and persuaded the helpless hero to accompany him to Troy[3]. By these modifications the plot, as we can see, was much improved, and its dramatic effectiveness heightened; but it still lacked the elements which are necessary to the greatest kind of tragedy, and the beauty of the Aeschylean drama must have consisted mainly in the splendid narratives with which it was embellished[4].

Euripides followed in the main the example set by Aeschylus. But he added a fresh interest to the story by the device of a Trojan embassy, which came to Lemnos to counteract the intrigues of Odysseus[5]. This innovation gave him an opportunity for one of those rhetorical displays in which he excelled. While Philoctetes was in doubt as to his course, the

[1] Proclus, Chrest. l. c.

[2] Dion Chrysost. or. 52, §§ 9, 10.

[3] Such was probably the conclusion of the Aeschylean drama; but there is no clear evidence.

[4] Such as Philoctetes' description to the chorus of his desertion and sufferings; and Odysseus' account of the disasters which had befallen the Greek army (Dion, l. c.).

[5] Dion Chrysost. l. c. § 13.

Trojans arrived, and endeavoured to persuade him to reject the overtures of the Greeks. Odysseus replied on the opposite side[1]; and it is easy to imagine the way in which such a situation would be utilised by Euripides, the eloquence with which each view of the question would be argued, and the appeals which would be made to the patriotism of Philoctetes, or to his sense of wrong. Eventually, however, patriotism won the day, and he consented to rejoin the Greek army.

Hitherto, in both these plays, the sympathy of the audience had been centered in Odysseus, and in the success of his stratagem. Sophocles, who came last, gave a new aspect to the tragedy, by transferring the interest from Odysseus to Philoctetes, and made the character of the latter the basis of the whole plot, thus converting the drama into a deep and interesting psychological study. To accomplish this purpose he introduced a new personage, in the shape of Neoptolemus, a young and ingenuous hero, whom Philoctetes had never seen, and who had therefore no need to conceal his identity. Neoptolemus now becomes the active agent in the intrigue, and is prompted by Odysseus from the background. He wins the sympathy and affection of Philoctetes by a false story of wrong suffered from the Greeks, and so obtains possession of the bow. Odysseus then appears, and the truth is made known. Philoctetes, though frantic with despair, refuses to yield. Neoptolemus, becoming ashamed of his fraud, restores the bow. Philoctetes is still obdurate, and affairs appear to have reached a dead-lock, when suddenly Hercules descends from heaven, and commands obedience to the will of the gods.

By introducing the artless Neoptolemus along with the unscrupulous Odysseus, and by his skilful arrangement of the incidents, Sophocles has contrived to present Philoctetes to our view under a far more varied aspect than would have been possible in the preceding dramas. We no longer see merely the violent side of his character, his bitter indignation, his fury against Odysseus and the Greeks, and his passion for revenge.

[1] Frag. 796 (Nauck).

Neoptolemus, the youth who 'appears to know no evil,' draws out all his better qualities, his warmth and large-heartedness, his pining for love and sympathy, and his scorn for deceit and meanness[1]. The picture of varied passion is as fine as anything in Sophocles. The play is essentially a character-play, like the Electra; and although towards the end, when the bow is restored, the plot takes one of those unexpected turns which are more in the style of the modern drama, as a rule the progress of events is simple, and their general course is clearly explained to the spectator in the opening scene.

The plausibility and naturalness with which Sophocles was accustomed to invest his plots is well exemplified by a comparison of his Philoctetes with those of his two predecessors. In Aeschylus and Euripides it was essential that Odysseus should not be recognised. Aeschylus, in his simple fashion, merely assumed that there was no recognition, without deigning to account for the fact, while Euripides caused Odysseus to be metamorphosed by Athene[2]. Still, in both cases there was a certain clumsiness which must have interfered with the illusion. Sophocles, as we have shown, avoided all awkwardness, by making Neoptolemus the chief agent in the plot. Again, in Aeschylus and Euripides Lemnos was an inhabited island, and the chorus, in both plays, consisted of Lemnians; yet they had left Philoctetes in solitude for ten years, and only visited him for the first time at the commencement of the action. Aeschylus, as before, left the anomaly unexplained, while Euripides hardly mended matters by causing his chorus to apologise for their long neglect[3]. Sophocles, in representing Lemnos as a desert island, and in forming his chorus out of followers of Odysseus, successfully evaded every difficulty.

The Philoctetes is often supposed to have had a political significance. It was produced, as already stated, in 409. Now in 411 Alcibiades, after long estrangement from Athens, had been elected general; in 410 he was largely instrumental in winning the victory of Cyzicus; in 407 he was finally restored to the

[1] Phil. 960 *τοῦ δοκοῦντος οὐδὲν εἰδέναι κακόν.*

[2] Dion Chrysost. l. c. § 5.

[3] Ibid. §§ 6, 7.

rights of citizenship. Here then was the case of a man, whose genius was necessary to the country from which he had been driven, and whose restoration was already being considered. The analogy between his situation and that of Philoctetes is obvious and striking, and could hardly fail to present itself to the mind of Sophocles. But whether he wrote the play with a political purpose is far more doubtful. The tone of the Philoctetes is purely ideal, and there is not a single phrase, from beginning to end, which can be regarded as a deliberate allusion to the events of the period.

(7) *The Oedipus Coloneus.*

The Oedipus Coloneus, that 'most tender of poems,' as Cicero calls it, has a peculiar and distinctive charm of tone such as no other Greek tragedy possesses[1]. In scenes of pensive beauty it shows us the calm, tranquil, and not inglorious close of a stormy and disastrous life. Oedipus, an exile from Thebes, has wandered for many years from land to land, blind and helpless, and bearing the stain of unutterable guilt. At length he reaches Colonus, and sits down to rest beside a leafy enclosure. He is told that it is the grove of the 'Holy Goddesses.' In a moment he remembers the prediction of Apollo, and recognises that his end is at hand. At the same time tidings of a new oracle are brought, which tells that his person, both in life and death, is of sacred importance, and will confer safety and prosperity on the land which possesses it. The gods have at length relented from their wrath, and bestowed upon him, at the end of his life, some recompense for his former sufferings. A kind of mysterious splendour surrounds his dying moments, and instead of being an outcast upon earth, he now becomes an object of emulous contention. The Thebans would fain induce him to return. But he renounces the country which had abandoned him to his misery, and attaches himself to Athens, where it was the will of heaven that he should die.

There is little action in the story, which seems at first

[1] 'Illud mollissimum carmen,' Cic. de Fin. 5. 1.

sight hardly suitable for a tragedy. But Sophocles has contrived to supply the necessary dramatic movement by the introduction of Creon and Polyneices, who are contending for the sovereignty of Thebes. On hearing the news of the oracle, and the importance of Oedipus, they come to implore his assistance; and their prayers and threats, and the scornful refusals of Oedipus, occupy the middle of the play, and provide those scenes of conflict and opposing passion which are the essence of the drama. Another dramatic effect of the most impressive kind is introduced at the close. Oedipus has hitherto been exhibited as a feeble and helpless old man, who cannot move a step without the guidance of his daughter. Suddenly there comes a flash of lightning and a burst of thunder—the signs predicted by the oracle. The bystanders are dazed and stupefied; but Oedipus, who understands the meaning of the omen, is transformed into another man. In the midst of the general terror and amazement he alone is strong, calm, and collected; and instead of requiring assistance himself, he becomes the guide and conductor of others, and with firm steps leads the way to the place appointed for his grave. This sudden change of attitude recalls the similar scene at the end of the Trachiniae, and is even more beautiful and pathetic.

The fiery passions displayed by Oedipus during the central portion of the play are in startling contrast with the air of resignation which pervades the commencement and the close. Misfortune has not cured his faults of temper, and he still exhibits on occasion the same violent impetuosity as in former times. The hatred with which he renounces his country, and the malignity with which he pronounces the curse upon his sons, are almost distressing in their intensity, and go far beyond what even the ancients, with all their glorification of revenge, considered pardonable[1]. At the same time this passionate want of self-control is not unnatural in an old man half-distracted by his sufferings, and reminds us of the hysterical outbursts of

[1] See above, p. 192.

Lear. And further than this, the object of Sophocles was, not to depict a perfect character, but to write an impressive play. If Oedipus had shown the same peaceful resignation throughout, the effect would have been tedious and monotonous. The violence of the central scenes imparts the requisite variety.

There seems no reason to doubt the express testimony of the ancients, that the Oedipus Coloneus was composed when Sophocles was approaching his ninetieth year[1]. This being so, it derives an additional pathos from the circumstances of its production; and the cheerful hope with which the care-worn Oedipus looks forward to his death, as a release from the troubles and sufferings of life, cannot fail to be regarded as having a personal application, and as reflecting the feelings of the aged poet.

§ 10. *Reputation among the Ancients.*

Sophocles, whose dramas were a perfect embodiment of the artistic aspirations of the Periclean age, appears to have retained the supremacy in public estimation during the whole of his lifetime[2]. It is true that during the latter part of his career he began to find a serious rival in Euripides, whose popularity, especially among the younger men, is proved by the allusions and invectives of Aristophanes. But Euripides was far less successful in the theatre[3]; and although the result of

[1] Argum. 1 Oed. Col. *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τῶν θαυμαστῶν, ὃ καὶ ἤδη γεγηρακὼς ὁ Σοφοκλῆς ἐποίησε.* Argum. 3 *τὸν ἐπὶ Κολωνῷ Οἰδίπουν ἐπὶ τετελευτηκότι τῷ πάππῳ Σοφοκλῆς ὁ υἱοῦς ἐδίδαξεν.* Val. Max. 8. 7. 2 'prope enim centesimum annum attigit, sub ipsum transitum ad mortem Oedipode Coloneo scripto . . . idque ignotum esse posteris filius Sophoclis Iophon esse noluit, sepulcro patris quae retuli insculpendo.'

That the play belongs to the poet's latest period is shown by the style of the language, the frequent divisions of the iambic verse, and the constant use of the third actor. See above, p. 180. A *fourth* actor, however, is not required, as sometimes asserted (Attic Theatre, p. 201).

[2] He won considerably more victories than any other tragic dramatist, viz. eighteen at the City Dionysia, besides others at the Lenaea (see above, p. 128). The two poets who came nearest to him were Astydamas with fifteen (Suidas, s.v.), and Aeschylus with thirteen (see above, p. 49).

[3] He only won five victories (Suidas v. *Εὐριπίδης*).

the theatrical competitions may sometimes have depended on casual circumstances, yet, when every allowance is made, the continued victories of Sophocles can only be accounted for on the supposition that he was the favourite poet of the two.

In the following century the position was to a certain extent reversed; with the general mass of the population Euripides now became the favourite, and his plays were reproduced with much greater frequency[1]. But among the critics, and the more refined and educated class of readers, Sophocles continued to be regarded as the prince of poets. Thus Xenophon placed him in the same rank with Homer, Zeuxis, and Polycleitus, as the most distinguished representative of his own particular art[2]; and the philosophers Polemon and Menedemus preferred him to any other writer of tragedy[3]. The opinion of Aristotle is no less decided. He considers Sophocles as the greatest of tragic poets, and the Oedipus Tyrannus as the greatest of tragedies[4]. He appears also to have based his rules for tragic composition mainly upon the practice of Sophocles. He praises his management of the chorus, approves of the idealism of his characters, and affirms that unmerited sufferings, like those of Oedipus, are the most appropriate subject for tragic treatment[5]. Above all he admires the skill of the Sophoclean plots; and the plausibility of the construction, the irony of the situations, and the impressive conduct of the catastrophes, are all cited as models for imitation[6].

In subsequent times there was little further change in the reputation of the two poets. Euripides still continued to be the more widely read, and the more universally popular; and the quotations from his writings are far in excess of those from Sophocles. But among the more cultured readers, though the merits of the rival poets were a frequent subject of dispute,

[1] Thus in 341, 340, and 339 B.C. the old tragedies reproduced at the City Dionysia were all tragedies of Euripides (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 973).

[2] Xen. Mem. 1. 4. 3.

[3] Diog. Laert. 2. 133, 4. 20.

[4] Sophocles and Homer are cited as the representative tragic and epic poets, the Oedipus Tyrannus and the Iliad as the types of tragic and epic poetry (Poet. cc. 3 and 26).

[5] Poet. cc. 13, 18 and 25.

[6] Ibid. cc. 9, 11, 15, 16, 24.

and though some preferred the rhetorical fluency of Euripides[1], the general verdict was still in favour of Sophocles. Dion Chrysostomus, in his elaborate comparison of the three great dramatists, assigns him the pre-eminence without hesitation, and shows a genuine appreciation of his various excellencies—the smoothness of his plots, the nobility of his characters, and the graceful charm of his lyrics[2]. Dionysius expresses the same opinion, and declares that in sublimity, elevation, and beauty of language, his superiority is manifest[3]. Cicero also ranks him with Homer and Pindar as supreme in his own sphere[4]; and the Roman poets, such as Virgil, Ovid, and Juvenal, invariably cite him as the type and model of tragic poetry[5].

Among the ancient critics Sophocles is often compared to Homer, of whom he is regarded as the imitator, and as the 'only genuine disciple[6].' At first sight the grounds of the comparison are not very obvious, and the subtlety of Sophocles appears rather to stand in contrast with the simplicity of the epic style. His language, too, as far as structure and substance are concerned, is not especially Homeric. Though he employs certain epic forms, and borrows epithets, phrases, and similes from the same source, he cannot be said to do so more than the other dramatists; in fact, his indebtedness to Homer,

[1] Quint. Inst. 10. 1. 68.

[2] Dion Chrysost. or. 52 ὁ τε Σοφοκλῆς μέσος ἔοικεν ἀμφοῖν εἶναι . . . (ἔχων) σεμνήν τινα καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῆ ποίησιν τραγικώτατα καὶ εὐεπέστατα ἔχουσαν, ὥστε πλείστην ἡδονὴν μετὰ ὕψους καὶ σεμνότητος ἐνδείκνυσθαι, τῇ τε διασκευῇ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀρίστῃ καὶ πιθανωτάτῃ κέχρηται . . . τά τε μέλη (ἔχει) . . . ἡδονὴν θαυμαστὴν καὶ μεγαλοπρέπειαν κ. τ. λ.

[3] Dion. Hal., Vett. Script. Cons. c. 11 Σοφοκλῆς δ' ἐν τοῖς πάθεσι διήνεγκε, τὸ τῶν προσώπων ἀξίωμα τηρῶν . . . καὶ οὐ κατώρθωσεν (ὁ Εὐριπίδης) τὰ γενικὰ καὶ μεγαλοφυῆ τῶν προσώπων ἤθη καὶ πάθη, καθάπερ Σοφοκλῆς. On the superiority of his *language* see De Comp. Verb. c. 24.

[4] Cic. Orator § 4 'nam in poetis non Homero soli locus est (ut de Graecis loquar) aut Archilocho aut Sophocli aut Pindaro, sed horum vel secundis, vel etiam infra secundos.'

[5] Virg. Ecl. 8. 8 'sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna cothurno.' Ovid, Amor. 1. 15. 15 'nulla Sophocleo veniet iactura cothurno.' Iuv. 6. 636 'grande Sophocleo carmen bacchamur hiatu.' Mart. 3. 20. 7 'aut in cothurnis horridus Sophocleis.'

[6] ὁ φιλόμηρος Σοφοκλῆς (Eustath. Il. pp. 605, 902, &c.). μόνον Σοφοκλέα τυγχάνειν Ὁμήρου μαθητήν (vita Soph. p. 7, Dindf.). ἔλεγεν οὖν (ὁ Πολέμων) τὸν μὲν Ὅμηρον ἐπικὸν εἶναι Σοφοκλέα· Ὅμηρον δὲ Σοφοκλέα τραγικόν (Diog. Laert. 4. 20).

in this respect, is less than that of Aeschylus[1]. But on further consideration it may perhaps appear that the comparison is not unjustified, though the resemblance is rather in general tenor than in matters of detail. Regarded, however, from this wider point of view the dramas of Sophocles may be said to reproduce, in more ways than one, the old Homeric spirit. The language displays the same combination of graceful finish with power and impressiveness; the characters, ideal yet human, are conceived in the Homeric vein[2]; and lastly, the moderation and restraint which Sophocles observes, even in scenes of the most violent passion, is more in the style of Homer than of the other tragic poets.

[1] See Lechner, De Sophocle poeta Ὁμηρικωτάτῳ.

[2] Cp. Vita Soph. p. 7 ἠθοποιεῖ δὲ . . . Ὁμηρικὴν ἐκματτόμενος χάριν. Aristot. Poet. c. 3 τῇ μὲν ὁ αὐτὸς ἂν εἴη μιμητὴς Ὁμήρῳ Σοφοκλῆς, μιμοῦνται γὰρ ἄμφω σπουδαίους.

There is no trace of the Homeric or
psychological in any of his violent
passions. See OT
Trachiniae
Philoctetes

CHAPTER IV.

EURIPIDES.

§ 1. *His Life.*

According to a common tradition Euripides was born at Salamis, in the autumn of 480, on the very day of the naval encounter between the Greeks and Persians[1]. If this date could be regarded as certain, it would establish a curious connexion between the lives of the three tragic poets, Euripides being born during the progress of the great battle in which Aeschylus was engaged as a combatant, and for which Sophocles afterwards led the chorus of thanksgiving. But the coincidence is so remarkable as to be open to suspicion[2]; and it is perhaps safer to accept the testimony of the Parian Marble, which ascribes the birth of Euripides to the close of the year 485[3].

[1] Vita Eur. p. 2 (Dindf.). Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης). Plut. Symp. 8. 1. 1. Diog. Laert. 2. 45. According to Philochorus he was 'over seventy,' according to Eratosthenes seventy-five, at the time of his death (vita Eur. p. 4). As he died in the winter of 407–406, their accounts are in harmony with the ordinary tradition about his birth. If the story is true, his mother must have taken refuge in Salamis, when the Athenians were driven from their homes by fear of the Persian invasion.

[2] The Greeks delighted in tracing such connexions, often without any regard for chronology. Thus Timaeus (a Sicilian historian of the fourth century B.C.) made Euripides die on the very same day on which the elder Dionysius was born, though the two events were separated by an interval of about twenty-five years. Plut. Symp. 8. 1. 1 ἀποθανόντος δέ, καθ' ἣν ἐγεννήθη Διονύσιος ὁ πρεσβύτερος τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ τυράννων· ἅμα τῆς τύχης (ὡς Τιμαῖος ἔφη) τὸν μιμητὴν ἐξαγούσης τῶν τραγικῶν παθῶν, καὶ τὸν ἀγωνιστὴν ἐπεισαγούσης. Even if we suppose, with Clinton (Fast. Hell. 1, p. 82), that Timaeus was referring, not to the *birth* of Dionysius, but to his *accession to power*, the date is incorrect; since Euripides must have been dead before the spring of 406, while Dionysius was elected sole general in the spring of 405.

[3] Marmor Par. ep. 50. The Marble is consistent throughout, putting his first tragic victory in 441, at the age of

His parents were natives of Phlya, a town on the east coast of Attica, and appear to have been of good family[1]. Hence Euripides, when a boy, was permitted to take part in the dance in honour of the Delian Apollo—a privilege confined to people of distinguished birth[2]. That he inherited considerable wealth from his father and mother is proved by the fact of his being enabled to devote himself to a life of literary leisure, as well as by other circumstances[3]. The comic poets, it is true, often cast ridicule on the poverty and obscurity of his parentage, calling his father a 'huckster,' and his mother a 'green-grocer[4].' But their sarcasms are inconsistent with the facts already mentioned, and may be accounted for by the supposition that part of his parents' income was derived from the ownership of farm property. In the same way Sophocles was sometimes described as the son of a blacksmith, because his father possessed slaves engaged in that trade[5].

It is said that while Euripides was still young, an oracle foretold that he would 'one day become famous, and win the

forty-three (ep. 50), and his death in 407–406, at the age of seventy-eight (ep. 60). The story about Salamis may have arisen from two causes, (1) from the desire to associate the careers of the three tragic poets with the day of the great victory, (2) from the fact that Euripides was often called a 'Salaminian,' owing to his having possessed property there (Corp. Ins. Gr. 3. 605. 2 Εὐρειπίδης Μνησαρχίδου Σαλαμείνιος, τραγικὸς ποιητής). See Mendelssohn, Acta Societatis Philologicae Lipsiensis, 1872, vol. ii. p. 161 foll.

[1] Suidas, v. Φλυεία. His father's name was Mnesarchus or Mnesarchides, his mother's Cleito (vita Eur. pp. 10 and 11, Suidas, v. Εὐριπίδης). There was a tradition which connected his parents with Boeotia, one account saying that they were exiled to that country (Suidas l. c.), the other that they were Boeotians by birth (Nicol. Damasc. in Stob. Flor. 44. 41). But as no reference to the fact is to be found in the comic poets, the whole story was probably a myth.

[2] Athen. p. 424 καὶ Εὐριπίδης ὁ ποιητὴς ἐν παισὶν ᾠνοχόησε. Θεόφραστος γοῦν ἐν τῷ περὶ μέθης φησί· πυνθάνομαι δ' ἔγωγε καὶ Εὐριπίδην τὸν ποιητὴν οἰνοχοεῖν Ἀθήνησι τοῖς ὀρχησταῖς καλουμένοις. ὠρχοῦντο δ' οὗτοι περὶ τὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος νεὼν τοῦ Δηλίου, τῶν πρώτων ὄντες Ἀθηναίων . . . καὶ διασώζεται Φλυῆσιν ἐν τῷ δαφνηφορείῳ γραφὴ περὶ τούτων. Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης)· καὶ γὰρ τῶν σφόδρα εὐγενῶν ἐτύγχανεν, ὡς ἀποδείκνυσι Φιλόχορος (an Attic antiquarian of the third century B. C.).

[3] He was celebrated as a collector of books (Athen. p. 3), and he was one of those who were called upon to fulfil the public liturgies (Aristot. Rhet. 3. 15); both of which facts prove that he belonged to the wealthier classes.

[4] Aristoph. Thesm. 387, Acharn. 478, Equit. 19, Ran. 947, and Schol. ad loc. Aul. Gell. N. A. 15. 20. Vita Eur. pp. 1, 10 and 11 (Dindf.).

[5] Vita Soph. p. 1.

crown of victory in many competitions,' and that his father, supposing that athletic contests were intended, caused him to be trained in boxing and wrestling, and sent him to compete at various games, in some of which he was successful[1]. It is also said that he practised painting in his youth, and that many of his paintings were preserved in after times at Megara[2]. These stories, however, depend solely on very late authority, and may have arisen from a confusion between the poet Euripides and other persons of the same name.

Whatever the training which he received in his boyhood, he began, from an early date, to manifest a strong natural bent towards poetry and philosophy. The chorus in the Alcestis, when they speak of having 'studied the writings of the poets,' and of having 'explored the mysteries of the heavens,' and when they describe themselves as 'versed in many speculations,' are probably referring to the youthful pursuits of Euripides himself[3]. The speculative turn of his mind would receive a decided impulse from the teachings of Anaxagoras, who began to expound his philosophy at Athens during the earlier part of the fifth century[4]. Euripides is reported to have been one of his most ardent disciples[5]; and the statement is

[1] Vita Eur. pp. 2 and 11. Gell. N. A. 15. 20. The oracle is given by Euseb. Pr. Ev. 5. 33 *ἔσται σοι κοῦρος, Μνησαρχίδη, ὄντινα πάντες | ἄνθρωποι τίσουσι, καὶ ἐς κλέος ἐσθλὸν ὀρούσει, | καὶ στεφέων ἱερῶν γλυκερὴν χάριν ἀμφιβαλεῖται.*

[2] Vita Eur. pp. 3, 10 and 12 (Dindf.).

[3] Alc. 962-972.

[4] Diog. Laert. 1. 7 *ἤρξατο δὲ φιλοσοφεῖν Ἀθήνησιν ἐπὶ Καλλίου ἐτῶν εἴκοσιν ὤν, ὥς φησι Δημήτριος ὁ Φαληρεὺς ἐν τῇ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἀναγραφῇ.*

[5] Vita Eur. pp. 2 and 10. Suidas (v. *Εὐριπίδης*). Gell. N. A. 15. 20 (quoting from Alexander Aetolus, a poet of the third century B.C.). There are one or two references to Anaxagoras in the plays of Euripides. (1) The lines in the Medea on the unpopularity of science (295-302 . . . *φθόνον πρὸς ἀστῶν ἀλφάνουσι δυσμενῆ. | σκαιοῖσι μὲν γὰρ καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ | δόξεις ἀχρεῖος κοὐ σοφὸς πεφυκέναι*) apparently allude to the prosecution of Anaxagoras for impiety, which took place about the time of the production of the play. (2) Theseus' remark (frag. 964) on the advantage of preparing one's self for future evil, contains, according to Cicero, a reference to Anaxagoras (Cic. Tusc. 3. 29 'quod autem Theseus a docto se audisse dicit, id de se ipso loquitur Euripides. Fuerat enim auditor Anaxagorae; quem ferunt, nuntiata morte filii, dixisse, "Sciebam me genuisse mortalem."' (3) The same sentiment of Anaxagoras is supposed to be alluded to in Alc. 904 foll. *ἐμοί τις ἦν ἐν γένει, ᾧ κόρος ἀξιόθρηνος | ᾤχετ' ἐν δόμοισι | μονόπαις· ἀλλ' ἔμπας | ἔφερε κακὸν ἄλις κ.τ.λ.* The two last references, however, are perhaps somewhat doubtful, since the maxim

confirmed by various traces of Anaxagorean doctrine which are to be found in his tragedies[1].

Throughout his life he retained his affection for philosophy and for the society of philosophers; and Socrates, Prodicus, Archelaus, and Protagoras became, in later times, his most intimate associates[2]. Socrates, though rarely visiting the theatre, seldom failed to be present when his plays were performed; and it was in his house that Protagoras read for the first time that treatise about the gods which led to his expulsion from Athens[3]. These philosophers, however, were not, like Anaxagoras, the masters and instructors of Euripides; and the biographers are hardly correct in asserting that it was from them that he learnt philosophy and rhetoric[4]. They all appear to have been younger than Euripides in point of years[5]; their relationship was that of companions, rather than of teachers; and their influence upon his character and opinions, though no doubt considerable, cannot be compared in extent with the influence exercised by Anaxagoras[6].

Though Euripides began to write tragedies in his eighteenth year, it was not till 455, when he was nearly thirty, that his plays were accepted by the archon, and represented at the

'sciebam me genuisse mortalem' was also ascribed to Solon (Diog. Laert. 2. 13). See Decharme, Euripide et son Theatre, p. 32.

[1] See below, pp. 270–272.

[2] Vita Eur. pp. 2 and 10 (Dindf.). Gellius, N. A. 15. 20.

[3] Aelian, V. H. 2. 13. Diog. Laert. 9. 54. Cp. ibid. 2. 22, where he is said to have lent his copy of Heraclitus to Socrates. His intimacy with Socrates is a frequent subject of satire in the comic poets, e. g. Aristoph. Ran. 1491–1493 χαρίεν οὖν μὴ Σωκράτει | παρακαθήμενον λαλεῖν | ἀποβαλόντα μουσικήν.

[4] Μαθητὴς Προδίκου μὲν ἐν τοῖς ῥητορικοῖς, Σωκράτους δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἠθικοῖς καὶ φιλοσόφοις (Suidas, v. Εὐριπίδης). ἀκουστὴς γενόμενος . . . Προδίκου καὶ Πρωταγόρου (vita Eur. p. 2). σχολάσαντα δὲ Ἀρχελάῳ τῷ φυσικῷ . . . ἐπὶ τραγῳδίαν ὁρμῆσαι (ibid. p. 10). According to the comic poets he was assisted in his tragedies by Socrates (Diog. Laert. 2. 18; Vita Eur. p. 2).

[5] Euripides, as we have seen, was probably born in 485. Protagoras was born about 480, Socrates in 468. Archelaus flourished about 450, Prodicus rather later.

[6] No definite traces of Socratic influence are to be found in the plays of Euripides. The points in which the two men agree—their width of sympathy, and the humanity of their sentiments on many questions—were part of the general tendency of the age. In many respects they differ considerably from one another, e. g. in their feelings on the subject of revenge, and in their attitude towards physical science.

public festivals. His first appearance was less brilliant than that of Sophocles, and he had to be content with the third place in the competition[1]. For the next twenty years or so he appears to have competed only at rare intervals; and in 438, when he brought out the Alcestis, the total number of dramas which he had then exhibited was not more than seventeen[2]. But during the last thirty-two years of his life he composed with surprising fertility, producing not less than seventy-five plays[3]. Many of his later works bear evident traces of rapid and careless execution. Still, in the best productions of his final period there are no signs of diminishing vigour; and the Bacchae, one of the most powerful of Greek tragedies, was written when he was more than seventy years of age[4]. Hence his career, like that of Aeschylus and Sophocles, is another proof of the extraordinary vitality and productiveness of the old Greek poets.

The total number of his plays was probably ninety-two[5], and seventy-eight of these, including eight satyric dramas, were still preserved in the time of the Alexandrian scholars[6]. Most of his works would doubtless be produced at the City Dionysia, in groups of four, according to the regulation which prevailed at that festival. Some of them, however, may have been written for the Lenaea; and some are known to have been composed, not for Athens, but for other places[7]. Hence the suggested

[1] Gell. N. A. 15. 20 'tragoediam scribere natus annos duodeviginti adortus est.' Vita Eur. p. 4 ἤρξατο δὲ διδάσκειν ἐπὶ Καλλίου ἄρχοντος . . . πρῶτον δὲ ἐδίδαξε τὰς Πελιάδας, ὅτε καὶ τρίτος ἐγένετο. Cp. also ibid. pp. 3, 10 and 12.

[2] Argum. Alc. τὸ δρᾶμα ἐποιήθη ιζ'. ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Γλαυκίνου ἄρχοντος.

[3] The total number of his dramas was apparently 92. See note 5.

[4] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 67.

[5] Ninety-two is the number given by Vita Eur. pp. 4 and 12. Gellius (N. A. 17. 4) says seventy-five, and Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης) seventy-five *or* ninety-two. But seventy-five is clearly too small, since the titles of about eighty are still known (see Appendix II). The number ninety-eight, given by Vita Eur. p. 11, may possibly be due to a mistake of some copyist.

[6] Vita Eur. pp. 4, 11, 12. Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης) says only seventy-seven were preserved, apparently deducting one of the satyric plays, which was considered spurious by some critics (Vita, p. 11).

[7] Thus the Andromache was not exhibited at Athens (Schol. Androm. 445 τοὺς τοῦ δράματος χρόνους οὐκ ἔστι λαβεῖν, οὐ δεδίδακται γὰρ Ἀθήνησιν). The Archelaus was written for the Court of Macedon (Vita, p. 4). According to Aelian, new tragedies appear to have been sometimes produced by Euripides at the Piraeus (Var. Hist. 2. 13 ὁ δὲ

division of his ninety-two dramas into twenty-three groups of four each is devoid of any certain foundation[1]. The comparative paucity of the satyric plays preserved may be explained, partly by the unimportance of these productions, partly by the fact that, even at those festivals where they were required, Euripides occasionally supplied their place with serio-comic tragedies like the Alcestis[2].

In spite of his splendid reputation, Euripides was not on the whole very successful in the competitions, and only obtained five victories in all—four during his lifetime, and one after his death, with posthumous plays brought out by his son or nephew[3]. He is said to have been careless about theatrical matters; and many of his failures may have been due to the fact that he devoted less attention than Aeschylus and Sophocles to the details of stage-management[4]. Still it is difficult to believe that there can have been any justification for his ill-success in 431, when he was only third, although the tragedies which he produced on that occasion included what is perhaps his masterpiece—the Medea[5]. This defeat, like that of Sophocles with the Oedipus Tyrannus, appears to be one of those cases, no less frequent in modern than in ancient dramatic

Σωκράτης στάνιον μὲν ἐπεφοίτα τοῖς θεάτροις, εἴ ποτε δὲ Εὐριπίδης ὁ τῆς τραγῳδίας ποιητὴς ἠγωνίζετο καινοῖς τραγῳδοῖς, τότε γε ἀφικνεῖτο, καὶ Πειραιοῖ δὲ ἀγωνιζομένου τοῦ Εὐριπίδου καὶ ἐκεῖ κατῄει.

[1] Those who make the division appeal to Suidas (v. *Εὐριπίδης*) *ἐπεδείξατο δὲ ὅλους ἐνιαυτοὺς κβ'*. They suppose that twenty-two groups of four each were produced by him during his lifetime, and a twenty-third after his death (viz. the Bacchae, Alcmaeon &c., Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 67).

[2] Argum. Alc.

[3] Vita Eur. pp. 11 and 12 (Dindf.). Gell. N. A. 15. 20. Suidas (v. *Εὐριπίδης*). He won his first victory in 441 (Marmor Par. ep. 60), and was also victorious in 428 with the Hippolytus and other plays (Argum. Hipp.), and after his death with the Bacchae, Iphigeneia, and Alcmaeon in Corinth (Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 67, Suidas, l. c.). He was second in 438 with the Alcestis, &c. (Argum. Alc.), and also in 415 with the Troades, &c. (Aelian, V. H. 2. 8).

[4] Vita Eur. p. 12 *οὐδεμίαν φιλοτιμίαν περὶ τὰ θέατρα ποιούμενος· διὸ τοσοῦτον αὐτὸν ἔβλαπτε τοῦτο ὅσον ὠφέλει τὸν Σοφοκλέα.*

[5] Euphorion was first on this occasion, Sophocles second, and Euripides third with the Medea, Philoctetes, Dictys, and Theristae (Argum. Med.). It has been suggested, in explanation of the verdict, that Euphorion was competing with plays written by his father Aeschylus, with which he is known to have been four times victorious (Suidas, v. *Εὐφορίων*).

history, which show that great original plays are not always fully appreciated on their first appearance.

Euripides was twice married, first to Melito, and secondly to Choerile, the daughter of Mnesilochus, by whom he had three sons[1]. Among the inmates of his house was a certain Cephisophon, a musician, who helped him in the musical part of his tragedies[2]. According to the current tradition his domestic happiness was embittered by the infidelity of his wives, concerning whom the following anecdotes are related by the biographers. It is said that his first wife was guilty of adultery soon after her marriage, and that Euripides, on discovering the fact, wrote the Hippolytus to gratify his hatred of women, and then proceeded to divorce her; and that subsequently, on hearing that she had married again, he remarked that it was foolish to expect that a woman who had been false to one husband would be faithful to another. He then took a second wife, but she turned out worse than the first, the adulterer in this case being Cephisophon. In consequence of this new misfortune Euripides now began to assail the female sex with increasing violence, so much so, that they banded themselves together in self-defence, and formed a plot to put him to death, either at the Thesmophoria, or in some other place. But on his

[1] Vita Eur. pp. 4 and 12. His sons were Mnesarchides, the merchant; Mnesilochus, the actor; and Euripides, the tragic poet. According to Vita Eur. p. 8 Choerile was his *first* wife. Her name is given as Choerine by Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 1, and by Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης), who also describes her as his first wife.

It has been suggested that in reality Euripides had only one wife—Aristophanes only mentions one—and that she was Melito, the daughter of Mnesilochus, and that Χοιρίλη was a nickname. Cp. Schol. Eur. Hec. 3, where it is stated that Hecuba was sometimes called Χοιρίλη, διὰ τὸ πολύπαιδα γενέσθαι· ἡ γὰρ χοῖρος πολλὰ τίκτει. The notion of the two wives, according to this theory, originated in the double name. So Wilamowitz, Analecta Euripidea, p. 149. Bergk, Griech. Lit. 3, p. 479.

[2] Aristoph. Frag. Incert. 4 (Meineke) Κηφισοφῶν ἄριστε καὶ μελάντατε· | σὺ δὴ συνέζης εἰς τὰ πόλλ' Εὐριπίδῃ, | καὶ συνεποιεῖς, ὥς φασι, τὴν μελῳδίαν. Ran. 944 εἶτ' ἀνέτρεφον μονῳδίας Κηφισοφῶντα μιγνύς. Ibid. 1452 ταυτὶ πότερ' αὐτὸς εὕρες ἢ Κηφισοφῶν; Vita Eur. p. 3 οἱ δὲ τὰ μέλη φασὶ Κηφισοφῶντα ποιεῖν. Cephisophon is described as the *slave* of Euripides in Vita Eur. pp. 6 and 9; and in Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 944, Acharn. 394. But the mere name shows that he cannot have been a slave. In Vita Eur. p. 12 he is incorrectly called the 'actor' of Euripides.

promising not to offend any more, his life was spared; and in return for this generosity he wrote those lines in the Melanippe, in which he declares that women are 'superior to men,' and that to attack them with invectives is a 'foolish archery[1].'

It is on this rather puerile gossip that the traditional opinion about the family life of Euripides is based. Much of it is clearly seen to be fictitious. Thus the supposed plot of the Athenian women owes its origin to the Thesmophoriazusae of Aristophanes, which some grammarian apparently imagined to be a record of actual fact. Moreover, the tale about Cephisophon is disproved by a certain passage in the Frogs, which shows that Euripides, up to the time of his death, was still living on friendly terms with Cephisophon and his second wife[2]. There is also something very suspicious in the manner in which the poet's writings are dragged into the story. Thus the remark which he is said to have made about his first wife is a mere extract from the Electra[3]; the Hippolytus is represented as the offspring of jealousy and disappointment; the Melanippe is a recantation, extracted by threats of vengeance. Seeing, then, that a large percentage of the narrative consists of manifest falsehoods, it is difficult not to feel sceptical as to the truth of the remainder; and the most probable conclusion seems to be that the scandal was a pure fabrication from first to last, and that it was concocted, after the manner of ancient biography, in order to connect the author's verses with his personal experiences, and to account for those rhetorical onslaughts upon the female character in which he sometimes indulges[4]. The only

[1] Vita Eur. pp. 6, 8, 9 and 12 (Dindf.). Suidas, v. Εὐριπίδης. Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 975, 1079. Gellius, N. A. 15. 20.

[2] Aristoph. Ran. 1407–1409 *καὶ μηκέτ' ἔμοιγε κατ' ἔπος, ἀλλ' ἐς τὸν σταθμὸν | αὐτός, τὰ παιδί', ἡ γυνή, Κηφισοφῶν, | ἐμβὰς καθήσθω συλλαβὼν τὰ βιβλία.*

[3] El. 923, 924 *δύστηνός ἐστιν, εἰ δοκεῖ τὸ σωφρονεῖν | ἐκεῖ μὲν αὐτὴν οὐκ ἔχειν, παρ' οἱ δ' ἔχειν.* Cp. Vita Eur. p. 8 *λέγοντος δὲ τοῦ γήμαντος αὐτὴν 'σωφρονεῖ παρ' ἐμοί,' 'δύστηνος εἶ,' ἔφη, 'εἰ γυναῖκα δοκεῖς παρ' ᾧ μὲν αὐτὴν σωφρονεῖν παρ' ᾧ δὲ μή.'*

[4] This habit, common to the ancient grammarians, of detecting a personal reference in a poet's writings, has already been alluded to in the case of Sophocles (see p. 134). As a further example we may mention the story told by Diog. Laert. 3. 6, that the line *θάλασσα κλύζει πάντα τἀνθρώπων κακά* was written by Euripides in allusion to his cure from

corroborative evidence is that contained in a line of the Frogs, where allusion is made to the immorality of some of the heroines in Euripides, and it is implied that the poet had been hoisted with his own petard[1]. But the reference here is unusually vague and ambiguous, and the absence of similar attacks in the other comedies affords a strong argument in the opposite direction. Indeed, if the married life of Euripides had been as unfortunate as tradition represents, it is incredible that an opponent like Aristophanes, who was restrained by no feelings of delicacy, and who lost no opportunity of abusing his mother, would have spared the reputation of his wives.

In character Euripides was the very reverse of Sophocles, being a man of studious and retiring disposition, fond of the companionship of his intimate friends, but averse to general society[2]. The bustle of public life had no attractions for him, and he avoided, as far as possible, any interference with politics and affairs of state. He is said to have once been sent on an embassy to Syracuse; but this, as far as we know, is the only public function which he ever discharged[3]. His ideal was a life of retirement and contemplation; and in a passage of the Ion, which has often been regarded as autobiographical, he refers to this very subject, enumerating all the intrigues, jealousies, and disappointments which accompany a career of political ambition, and painting, as a contrast, the tranquil and contented existence of the youthful Ion, devoted to the service of the temple, protected by his seclusion from all temptation to guilt, and happy in the enjoyment of 'leisure, that sweetest of human possessions[4].'

Following this tendency Euripides passed much of his time in

illness by sea-bathing, when he was visiting Egypt with Plato in 400 B.C. This tale ignores the fact that Euripides died in 407 B.C.

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1045–1048 ΕΥ. μὰ Δί', οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης οὐδέν σοι. ΔΙΧ. μηδέ γ' ἐκείη. | ἀλλ' ἐπί τοι σοὶ καὶ τοῖς σοῖσιν πολλὴ πολλοῦ 'πικαθῆτο, | ὥστε γε καὐτόν σε κατ' οὖν ἔβαλεν. ΔΙ. νὴ τὸν Δία τοῦτό γέ τοι δῆ. | ἃ γὰρ ἐς τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐποίεις, αὐτὸς τούτοισιν ἐπλήγης.

[2] Vita Eur. p. 8 σύννους καὶ αὐστηρός. Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης) φεύγων τὰς συνουσίας.

[3] Aristot. Rhet. 2. 6 διὸ εὖ ἔχει ἡ τοῦ Εὐριπίδου ἀπόκρισις πρὸς τοὺς Συρακοσίους. The occasion, as Schol. ad loc. explains, was an embassy on which Euripides was serving.

[4] Ion 585 647.

retirement at Salamis, studying and composing in a grotto which looked out upon the sea [1]. His passion for books and literature was a marked feature in his character, and the references to the subject are unusually frequent in his tragedies [2]. His library, which is sarcastically alluded to in the Frogs, was celebrated among the ancients for its completeness [3]. The cultivation of literature is often described by him as one of the chief delights of human existence; and the chorus in the Erectheus are represented as yearning for peace, and eager to hang up shield and spear, that they may pass their old age in quietness, unfolding the writings which contain the utterances of the wise [4].

The uprightness and dignity of his character are proved by the negative testimony of Aristophanes, who, in spite of the frequency of his invectives, has no accusation of a strictly personal kind to bring against him [5]. Later writers sometimes speak of him as 'gloomy and morose,' as a 'foe to laughter,' and as one who was 'unable to be merry even over his wine [6].'

[1] Vita Eur. p. 8 Dindf. Gellius, N. A. 15. 20.

[2] E.g. Alc. 962 *ἐγὼ καὶ διὰ μούσας | καὶ μετάρσιος ᾖξα, καὶ | πλείστων ἀψάμενος λόγων κ.τ.λ.* Herc. Fur. 673 *οὐ παύσομαι τὰς Χάριτας | Μούσαις συγκαταμιγνύς . . . μὴ ζῴην μετ' ἀμουσίας.* Hipp. 451 *ὅσοι μὲν οὖν γραφάς τε τῶν παλαιτέρων | ἔχουσιν, αὐτοί τ' εἰσὶν ἐν μούσαις ἀεί κ.τ.λ.* Ibid. 954 *πολλῶν γραμμάτων τιμῶν καπνούς.* Iph. Aul. 798 *εἴτ' ἐν δέλτοις Πιερίσιν | μῦθοι τάδ' ἐς ἀνθρώπους | ἤνεγκαν παρὰ καιρὸν ἄλλως.* Med. 419 *μοῦσαι δὲ παλαιγενέων λήξουσ' ἀοιδᾶν | τὰν ἐμὰν ὑμνεῦσαι ἀπιστοσύναν.*

[3] Athen. p. 3. Cp. Aristoph. Ran. 943 *χυλὸν διδοὺς στωμυλμάτων, ἀπὸ βιβλίων ἀπηθῶν.* Ibid. 1409 *ἐμβὰς καθήσθω συλλαβὼν τὰ βιβλία.*

[4] Frag. 369 *κείσθω δόρυ μοι μίτον ἀμφιπλέκειν ἀράχναις, | μετὰ δ' ἡσυχίας πολιῷ γήρᾳ συνοικοίην· | . . . δέλτων τ' ἀναπτέσσοιμι γῆρυν | ἃν σοφοὶ κλέονται.*

[5] Unless Ran. 1048 (*ἃ γὰρ ἐς τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐποίεις αὐτὸς τούτοισιν ἐπλήγης*) be supposed to imply a charge of adultery. But there is no other suggestion of the same kind in Aristophanes.

Euripides was represented by some later writers, such as Hieronymus of Rhodes, as a man of a gross and sensual character. Cp. Athen. p. 604. Aelian, Var. Hist. 2. 21, 13. 4. Plut. Amator. c. 24. Athen. p. 557 (the remark ascribed to Sophocles, *εἰπόντος Σοφοκλεῖ τινος ὅτι μισογύνης ἐστὶν Εὐριπίδης, Ἐν γε ταῖς τραγῳδίαις, ἔφη ὁ Σοφοκλῆς· ἐπεὶ ἔν γε τῇ κλίνῃ φιλογύνης*). According to Suidas (v. *Εὐριπίδης*) and Athen. p. 598 (quotation from Hermesianax) Euripides met his death in Macedonia in the course of a love adventure. But this, and other similar stories, are rejected with contempt by Addaeus, a poet of the fourth century B. C., and a native of Macedonia (Anthol. Pal. 7. 51 *οὔ σε κυνῶν γένος εἷλ', Εὐριπίδη, οὐδὲ γυναικὸς | οἶστρος, τὸν σκοτίης Κύπριδος ἀλλότριον κ.τ.λ.*).

[6] Gellius, N. A. 15. 20 *ὁ δ' Ἀναξαγόρου τρόφιμος Χαιοῦ | στρυφνὸς μὲν ἔμοιγε προσειπεῖν | καὶ μισόγελως καὶ τωθάζειν | οὐδὲ παρ' οἶνον μεμαθηκώς* (the verses

This description, however, appears to be based on the conventional conception of the philosophic character, as depicted by ancient satirists, and need not be taken too seriously. It was probably due to the comic poets, who treated all philosophers with contempt, and who regarded Euripides, on account of his speculative tastes, as belonging to the same sect.

As for his personal appearance, he is described by the ancients as having gray hair, a long beard, and moles upon his face[1]. The earliest recorded portrait is the statue erected in the theatre towards the close of the fourth century[2]; but it can scarcely be doubted that, in the case of a man of his celebrity, some contemporary likeness was in existence. Numerous busts have been discovered in modern times, all distinguished by a close mutual resemblance; and one of the best of these (Fig. 6) is here reproduced[3]. The features, with their strongly-marked characteristics, appear to faithfully reflect the thoughtful and sensitive temperament of the poet.

Shortly before his death, though the exact date is not known, Euripides retired to the court of Macedon, on the invitation of Archelaus[4]. His departure was ascribed by later gossip to dread of the comic poets, and shame on account of his wife's immorality[5]. But seeing that he had already endured the jeers of the comic poets for more than twenty years with equanimity, and since his wife's infidelity was in all probability a fiction, we may be content to leave his motives in obscurity. During his journey he stayed for some time at Magnesia in Thessaly, where he was honoured with various distinctions[6]. On reaching

are quoted from Alexander Aetolus, a tragic poet of the third century B.C.). Cp. Vita Eur. p. 8, Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης).

[1] Vita Eur. p. 4 ἐλέγετο δὲ καὶ βαθὺν πώγωνα θρέψαι καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ὄψεως φακοὺς ἐσχηκέναι. Aristoph. Thesm. 190 ἔπειτα πολιός εἰμι καὶ πώγων' ἔχω. His δυσωδία στόματος is mentioned by Aristot. Pol. 5. 10, Stob. Flor. 41. 6, and Vita Eur. p. 9.

[2] Plut. X Orat. p. 841.

[3] It is copied from the cast in the Oxford University Galleries. On the various busts of Euripides see Baumeister's Denkmäler, 1, p. 516.

[4] Vita Eur. pp. 4, 10 and 12 (Dindf.). Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης). Probably his retirement was subsequent to the production of his Orestes in 408.

[5] Vita Eur. pp. 10 and 12.

[6] Ibid. p. 4 μετίστη δὲ ἐν Μαγνη-

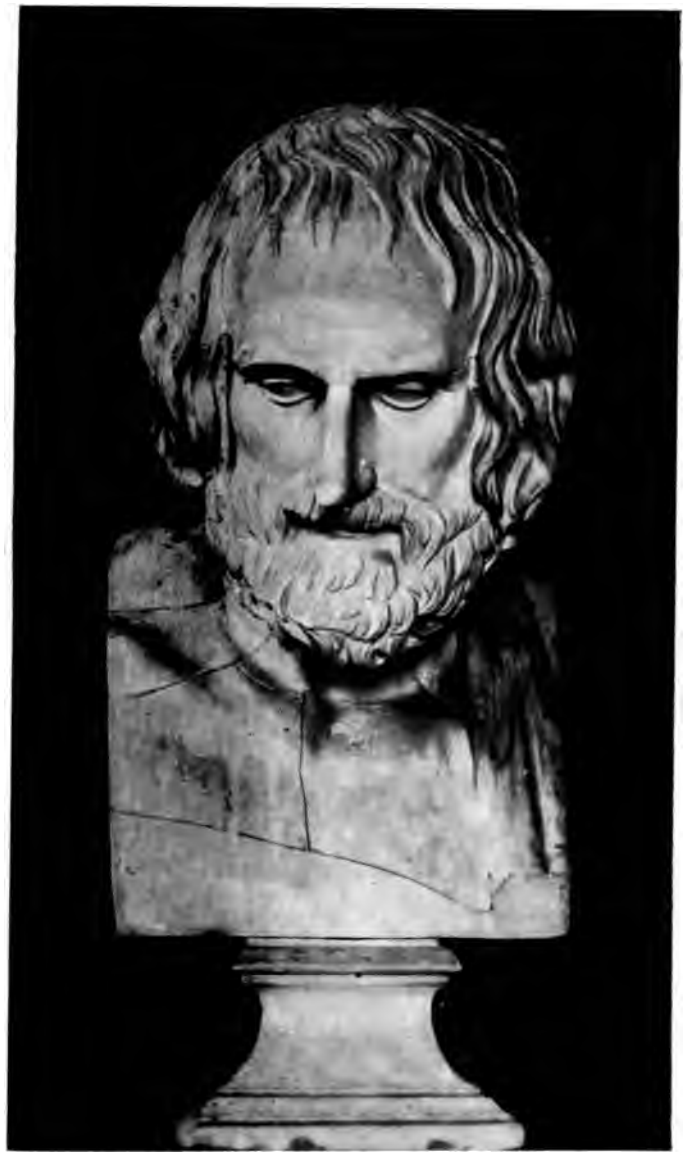

FIG. 6. EURIPIDES

Macedon he was treated by Archelaus with the greatest consideration, and frequently consulted on political matters, besides being appointed to some office in the Treasury[1].

Several stories are told about his life at the Macedonian court[2]. It is said that he was once asked to write a tragedy about Archelaus himself, and that he refused to do so, expressing a hope that the king would never become a suitable subject for a tragic drama[3]. However, he subsequently composed a play on the history of the mythical Archelaus, the founder of the dynasty[4]. It is also said that Decamnichus, the king's favourite slave, who led the conspiracy which resulted in the assassination of Archelaus in 399, conceived his first hatred for his master on account of his having been handed over for punishment to Euripides, whom he had offended by an allusion to some physical defect[5]. But as the conspiracy was seven years later than the death of Euripides, Decamnichus, if the story is true, must have nursed his wrath for a considerable time; and Plato, in his account of the matter, ascribes his action to political ambition, and says nothing about Euripides[6].

His death took place in the winter of 407–406, in the seventy-eighth year of his age[7]. The same love of the marvellous,

σίᾳ καὶ προξενίᾳ ἐτιμήθη καὶ ἀτελείᾳ. ἐκεῖθεν δὲ εἰς Μακεδονίαν περὶ Ἀρχέλαον γενόμενος κ.τ.λ. According to a certain Eparchides, Euripides also lived for some time in Icarus, where he wrote an epigram on a woman and her three children who were killed by eating mushrooms (Athen. p. 61. Bergk, Poet. Lyr. p. 590). Probably the ascription of the epigram to Euripides, and the story of his visit to Icarus, was a mere conjecture on the part of Eparchides.

[1] Vita Eur. p. 4 καὶ μάλα ἔπραττε παρ' αὐτῷ, ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν διοικήσεων ἐγένετο. Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης), παρ' ᾧ διῆγε τῆς ἄκρας ἀπολαύων τιμῆς. Solinus 9. 15 'hic Archelaus in tantum litterarum mire amator fuit ut Euripidi tragico consiliorum summam concrederet.'

[2] In addition to those related in the text we may mention the tale in Plutarch (Apophthegm. Reg. 93) of a certain courtier who asked the king for a golden cup. Archelaus ordered the cup to be given to Euripides, saying to the man who had made the request, σὺ μὲν αἰτεῖν ἐπιτήδειος εἶ καὶ μὴ λαμβάνειν· οὗτος δὲ λαμβάνειν καὶ μὴ αἰτῶν.

[3] Diomedes, p. 488.

[4] Vita Eur. p. 4 περὶ Ἀρχέλαον γενόμενος διέτριψε καὶ χαριζόμενος αὐτῷ δρᾶμα ὁμωνύμως ἔγραψε. See Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 426.

[5] Arist. Pol. 5. 10.

[6] Plat. Alcib. p. 141 D.

[7] Marmor Par. ep. 63. Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 197 (who says he died ἕκτῳ ἔτει after the production of the Thesmophoriazusae in the January of 411; and this, counting inclusively, brings us to the beginning of 406).

which invested the deaths of Aeschylus and Sophocles with strange and extraordinary details, provided terminations no less dramatic for the career of Euripides. Some said he was torn in pieces by women. Others said he was killed by the royal hounds, while returning from dinner, or while walking abroad, or while engaged in a love affair. Others again said that the hounds were let loose on him by jealous poets, or by rivals in love, or by servants who had a grudge against him[1]. But Addaeus, a poet of the fourth century B.C., and the author of an epigram about Euripides in the Anthology, is no doubt correct in rejecting these fables, and in ascribing his death to natural decay[2]. He was buried with much splendour by Archelaus, who showed deep sorrow for his loss[3]; and his tomb was placed at the confluence of two streams, in a valley near Arethusa, a coast-town of Macedonia[4]. During his lifetime, though not

Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης) places his death in the ninety-third Olympiad (408–405 B.C.).

This date is confirmed by the story about Sophocles, who is said, after the death of Euripides, to have appeared in the theatre, together with his actors and chorus, in the garb of mourning (Vita Eur. pp. 5 and 13). Now Sophocles must have been dead before the production of the Frogs in the January of 405. Hence the last theatrical performance in which he could have taken part would be the City Dionysia in March 406. Euripides, therefore, must have died before that date. It follows that Diodorus is wrong in assigning his death to the archonship of Callias, i.e. 406–405 B.C. (Diod. Sic. 13. 103, quoting from Apollodorus, the author of a χρονικὴ σύνταξις).

He was seventy-eight according to the Parian Marble, which placed his birth in 485–484. The other authorities, assigning his birth to 480, describe him as seventy-five or 'over seventy' (Vita Eur. pp. 4 and 12. Suidas, v. Εὐριπίδης).

[1] The earliest mention of such stories is in Hermesianax, an elegiac poet of about 340 B.C., quoted by Athen. p. 598 εἰσόκε τοι δαίμων Εὐριπίδῃ εὕρετ' ὄλεθρον | Ἀμφιβίου στυγνῶν ἀντιάσαντι κυνῶν. Cp. Sotades (Alexandrian poet, about 280 B.C.) apud Stob. Flor. 98. 9 κύνες οἱ κατὰ Θρᾴκην Εὐριπίδην ἔτραγον. Vita Eur. pp. 5, 10, and 12. Suidas (v. Εὐριπίδης). Gellius, N. A. 15. 20. Anthol. Pal. 7. 44. Val. Max. 9. 12. 4. Steph. Byzant. v. Βορμίσκος. Diod. Sic. 13. 103. Ovid, Ibis 595. Diogenianus, 7. 52.

[2] Anthol. Pal. 7. 51 οὔ σε κυνῶν γένος εἷλ', Εὐριπίδη, οὐδὲ γυναικὸς | οἶστρος, τὸν σκοτίης Κύπριδος ἀλλότριον, | ἀλλ' Ἀΐδης καὶ γῆρας. The silence of Aristophanes is also strongly in favour of the supposition that there was nothing extraordinary about the death of Euripides.

[3] Solinus, 9. 15 'cuius suprema non contentus prosequi sumptu funeris crinem tonsus est et moerorem quem animo conceperat vultu publicavit.'

[4] Vita Eur. pp. 4 and 12. Anthol. Pal. 7. 49 & 51. Plut. Lycurg. c. 31. Vitruvius, 8. 3. Amm. Marcell. 27. p. 458. Plin. N. H. 31. 19. Suidas alone gives a different account (v. Εὐρι-

very successful in the tragic contests, he had been held in great veneration by the Athenians, who bestowed upon him the distinction of dining at the public table in the Prytaneum, and made him priest of Apollo of Zoster[1]. After his death they sent an embassy to Macedon, to request that his bones might be transferred to Athens for burial; but the request was refused[2]. However, they erected a cenotaph to his memory on the road between Athens and the Peiraeus[3]. Tradition says that both the cenotaph and the tomb were afterwards struck by lightning—an occurrence which was regarded by the ancients as a conspicuous mark of divine favour[4].

§ 2. *General Characteristics.*

Of the three great tragic poets of Greece, Euripides, who comes latest in point of time, is also by far the most modern in tone and sentiment. Though separated from Sophocles by an interval of only a very few years, he seems to belong in reality to another generation, and to breathe a different spiritual atmosphere. In the tragedies of Sophocles, with their ethical completeness and artistic symmetry, the spirit of the Periclean age had found its most perfect expression. Euripides reflects the feelings of that later and more changeful epoch, in which the old and exclusively Hellenic culture was beginning to gradually disappear, and to be replaced by wider and more cosmopolitan views of life. His dramas are the genuine offspring of this age of movement and transition; and, as a result, their design is less uniform, and their purpose less

πίδης)· καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ αὐτοῦ ἐν Πέλλῃ μετακομίσαι τὸν βασιλέα.

[1] Euseb. Pr. Ev. 5. 33 εἰ μὲν οὖν ὁ κρότος ἱκανὸς κριτὴς καὶ ἡ ἐν ἀκροπόλει τράπεζα, οὐδὲν ἔτι λέγω, βλέπων ἐν ἀκροπόλει δειπνοῦντα τὸν Εὐριπίδην καὶ τὸν Ἀθηναίων ἅμα καὶ τὸν Μακεδόνων δῆμον ἐπιψοφοῦντα. Vita Eur. p. 3 Dindf. φασὶ δὲ . . . γενέσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ πυρφόρον τοῦ Ζωστηρίου Ἀπόλλωνος. Zoster is the name of a promontory about ten miles south-east of Athens.

[2] Gellius, N. A. 15. 20.

[3] Vita Eur. p. 5. Paus. 1. 2. 2. On the cenotaph was an inscription, said to have been written either by Thucydides the historian, or by Timotheus the musician (Vita l. c.)—μνῆμα μὲν Ἑλλὰς ἅπασ' Εὐριπίδου, ὀστέα δ' ἴσχει | γῆ Μακεδών· τῇ γὰρ δέξατο τέρμα βίου. | πατρὶς δ' Ἑλλάδος Ἑλλάς, Ἀθῆναι. πλεῖστα δὲ Μούσας | τέρψας ἐκ πολλῶν καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον ἔχει.

[4] Vita Eur. p. 4. Plut. Lycurg. c. 31

definite and single-hearted. In some of their qualities they recall the past, in others they point unmistakeably towards the future; and this curious blending of old and new testifies to the variety of the influences under which they were composed. While they still preserve the stately form and structure of the ancient tragedy, they are animated by a different spirit, and in their general scope and tendency, and in their methods of dramatic treatment, they often anticipate in the most striking fashion the characteristic features of the romantic drama of modern Europe. Hence the position which they hold in the general history of the stage is an intermediate one. They form, as it were, a link of connexion between the antique severity of Sophocles, and the freedom and passion of Shakespeare and Calderon.

(1) *Innovations in the spirit of Tragedy.*

The most important of the points which differentiate Euripides from his predecessors, and connect him with the moderns, is his truthful and accurate imitation of nature. Compared with Aeschylus or Sophocles he may justly be described as a realist in art. This quality is nowhere more apparent than in his mode of delineating character, in which, abandoning the ancient paths, he follows a course more in accordance with his own genius. Though his personages are all still taken from the legendary age, he no longer endeavours, like the older poets, to invest them with an ideal colouring, by magnifying their excellencies and veiling their defects. In obedience to that wider sympathy with everything human, which was characteristic of the time, he is content to paint men and women 'as they are[1].' His characters, in spite of the heroic names which they bear, are all genuine Athenians of the fifth century, copied faithfully from contemporary life. They represent every grade of mankind, from the highest to the lowest. The mean, paltry, and contemptible side of human nature is depicted with as much care and accuracy as the majestic and imposing. Treated in

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 25 Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν οἵους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἷοι εἰσί.

this way the old heroic figures acquire a strangely life-like and modern aspect. Agamemnon, the commander of the Grecian fleet, becomes an irresolute and querulous old man, who shrinks in dismay before the anger of his wife, and sits weeping in his tent, the picture of indecision, writing letter after letter, and tearing them up as soon as written[1]. Hermione, with her vulgar pride, her hysterical petulance, and her mean tyranny over her rival, is a faithful portrait of a spiteful and ill-bred woman, such as a modern novelist might have drawn[2]. Helen, the ideal creation of the old epics, becomes an artful and rapacious courtesan, who follows Paris for the sake of his Asiatic wealth, skilfully revives his waning affections by pretended regrets for Menelaus, and whose sole anxiety, at the fall of Troy, is to provide herself with an establishment among the Greeks[3].

This realism is not, however, confined to the characters, but applied equally to the incidents of the legends, which are treated with no less freedom. The ideal grandeur which they had assumed in the hands of Aeschylus and Sophocles is replaced by a more homely and domestic tone. Sometimes, to effect this purpose, the very texture of the myth is transformed, as in the Electra, where the princess is married to a country labourer, and the scene of the action is laid in a cottage. In other plays, even where the mythical setting is unchanged, the whole colouring is like that of ordinary life. The various little details and circumstances of every-day existence, instead of being excluded, as beneath the dignity of tragedy, are purposely introduced to give reality to the representation. Take, for example, the scene which depicts the arrival of Agamemnon's wife and family at Aulis. The bustle of the chariot's approach, the servants holding the horses' heads and helping the ladies to dismount, Clytaemnestra's orders for the disposal of the luggage and her anxiety for the baby's safety, are all reproduced with circumstantial accuracy, like a description in a novel[4]. References to

[1] Iph. Aul. 34-42, 730-750.
[2] Androm. 147-153, 163-169, 825 foll.
[3] Troad. 993-997, 1002-1009.
[4] Iph. Aul. 607-630.

common and familiar objects, 'such as we use and are accustomed to,' occur continually throughout his dramas[1]. Ion, the minister of Apollo, appears on the temple steps, brush in hand, sweeping away the dust[2]; and the chorus in the Hippolytus are washing clothes when they hear of the illness of their mistress[3]. The tragic dress, too, instead of being restricted to one dignified type, is adapted to the circumstances of the characters. Menelaus, after his shipwreck, appears in tattered garments, which excite the compassion of the Egyptian king[4]; and Telephus, when wandering in beggary, is dressed like a beggar, with staff and wallet, and no attempt is made to disguise his miserable condition[5].

But it is in scenes of violent and uncontrollable emotion that the naturalism of Euripides produces its most impressive results. The most furious of the passions are painted by him with a frankness and straightforwardness which were as yet unknown to the Attic stage. Aeschylus and Sophocles, in delineating such passions, had confined themselves mainly to their spiritual aspect, passing over everything that was physically distressing or repulsive. Euripides shows no such reserve; he exhibits without disguise all the outward effects of mental suffering. Love and jealousy and remorse are depicted as raging in their utmost fury, and wasting the frames of their victims with madness and disease. The physical symptoms and accompaniments are presented in vivid and realistic detail. The difference of method may be well exemplified by comparing his picture of the madness of Orestes with that drawn by Aeschylus. In Aeschylus the frenzy of Orestes is a weird and supernatural visitation, inspired directly by the gods, and mysterious and unearthly in its effects. It is a kind of idealised madness[6]. Euripides, abandoning this miraculous

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 959 *οἰκεῖα πράγματ' εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ', οἷς σύνεσμεν.*

[2] Ion 112–123.

[3] Hipp. 121–134.

[4] Hel. 415 *ὄχλον γὰρ ἐσπεσεῖν ῥᾳσχυνόμην, | ὥσθ' ἱστορῆσαι τὰς ἐμὰς δυσχλαινίας.* Ibid. 1204 *Ἄπολλον, ὡς ἐσθῆτι δυσμόρφῳ πρέπει.*

[5] Aristoph. Acharn. 432 foll., where mention is made of his *ῥακώματα* 432, *πιλίδιον Μύσιον* 439, *πτωχικὸν βακτήριον* 448, *σπυρίδιον* 453, *κοτυλίσκιον τὸ χεῖλος ἀποκεκρουμένον* 459, *χυτρίδιον* 463.

[6] Choeph. 1048–1062.

clement, treats the case as one of ordinary delirium, produced by natural causes. In a scene of unsurpassed power he shows us Orestes in the sick-chamber, sitting up half-awake on his bed, and gazing vacantly around him, his face unwashed, and his hair hanging over his eyes. His sister, standing by his bedside, wipes the froth from his eyes and mouth, and helps him to rise to his feet; but the effort is too much for his strength, and he falls back prostrate. Suddenly the fit seizes him, he leaps to his feet, and rushes across the stage, shrieking with terror at the sight of the phantom Furies. As suddenly he comes to his senses again, and sinks back exhausted, wondering where he is, and melted to tears by the sight of his sister's agony [1].

Another characteristic which, no less than his realism, distinguishes Euripides from the older tragic poets, and marks him out as the forerunner of the romantic school of dramatists, is his tenderness and sentimentality. Of all the Greek poets he is the most pathetic and touching, and the most modern in his feelings and sympathies. His pictures of wedded love, of the innocent happiness of childhood, and of all the ties and affections of domestic life, reveal a softness and gentleness of disposition which are rarely found in Attic writers before his time [2]. 'Fair,' he says, 'is the light of the sun, fair the unruffled surface of the sea, and earth's vernal blossoms, and the teeming wealth of rivers; many things are fair and worthy of praise; but no sight is so glorious and so beautiful as the sight of little children in their home [3].' This intense sympathy with the more affectionate feelings of human nature gives a peculiar charm to his studies of female character, and some of his heroines are among the most loveable figures in literature, and remind us of the Desdemonas and Ophelias of Shakespeare. The trustful and loving simplicity of such natures is beautifully portrayed.

[1] Orest. 211–282. Cp. also the magnificent picture of Phaedra's passion and despair in Hipp. 198–245.

[2] Cp. Ion 958–963, Androm. 413–420, Suppl. 1094–1104, Herc. Fur. 69–79, &c.

[3] Frag. 316 γύναι, καλὸν μὲν φέγγος ἡλίου τόδε, | καλὸν δὲ πόντου χεῦμ' ἰδεῖν εὐήνεμον, | γῆ τ' ἠρινὸν θάλλουσα πλούσιόν θ' ὕδωρ, | πολλῶν τ' ἔπαινον ἔστι μοι λέξαι καλῶν· | ἀλλ' οὐδὲν οὕτω λαμπρὸν οὐδ' ἰδεῖν καλὸν | ὡς τοῖς ἅπασι καὶ πόθῳ δεδηγμένοις | παιδῶν νεογνῶν ἐν δόμοις ἰδεῖν θάλος.

Nothing could exceed, for example, the tenderness of that scene in which Iphigenia, clasping her father's hands in supplication, reminds him of her childish days, when she used to sit on his knees and talk about the future, fondly anticipating the time when she would have a house of her own, and be able to receive her father as a guest[1]. And there is perhaps no character in ancient poetry which has aroused deeper admiration than that of Alcestis, the devoted wife and tender-hearted mistress, whose presence in the house is like a gleam of sunshine, and whose affectionate regard for even the humblest member of the household is shown, during her dying moments, by her tender words of farewell[2].

The sentimental and romantic disposition of Euripides is apparent, also, in his treatment of the subject of sexual love—a subject which before his time had been considered as hardly worthy of the tragic stage. Euripides, who may be regarded as the founder of the love drama, was the first to give prominence to this passion, and to make it the ruling motive of his plays. Two of the surviving tragedies—the Hippolytus and the Medea—are based on plots of this kind, and rank among his greatest and most original creations. The scenes which portray the love-sick desperation of Phaedra, and the jealous fury of Medea, are written with a force and poetical fervour which have hardly been equalled in any of the innumerable imitations to which they have given rise. The same motive was also employed, under various forms and aspects, in many of the lost plays, such as those which dealt with the seduction of Aerope, the adulterous passion of Clytia and Stheneboea, and the lust of Canace and Pasiphae[3]. But the drama whose loss we have most reason to regret is the Andromeda, in which the principal feature was the love of Perseus for the princess whose life he

[1] Iph. Aul. 1220-1232.

[2] Alc. 192-195 *πάντες δ' ἔκλαιον οἰκέται κατὰ στέγας | δέσποιναν οἰκτείροντες. ἡ δὲ δεξιὰν | προὔτειν' ἑκάστῳ, κοὔτις ἦν οὕτω κακὸς | ὃν οὐ προσεῖπε καὶ προσερρήθη πάλιν.* Cp. 765-771 *καὶ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐν δόμοισιν ἐστιῶ | ξένον, πανοῦργον κλῶπα καὶ λῃστήν τινα, | ἡ δ' ἐκ δόμων βέβηκεν, οὐδ' ἐφεσπόμην, | οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ', ἀποιμώζων ἐμὴν | δέσποιναν, ἡ 'μοὶ πᾶσί τ' οἰκέταισιν ἦν | μήτηρ· κακῶν γὰρ μυρίων ἐρρύετο, | ὀργὰς μαλάσσουσ' ἀνδρός.*

[3] In the Κρῆσσαι, Φοῖνιξ, Σθενέβοια, Αἴολος, and Κρῆτες. See Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag.

had saved, and which appears to have been the solitary example, among the great tragedies of antiquity, of a plot based upon the romantic affection of a youth for a maiden[1]. Such a play, with its striking anticipation of the favourite motive of modern fiction, would have possessed a unique interest at the present day. It is described by the scholiast as 'one of the most beautiful' of the works of Euripides, and this judgement is confirmed by the grace and tenderness of the existing fragments[2].

The same innovating spirit which produced the love dramas of Euripides, also caused him to attempt various other experiments in dramatic composition, which were equally foreign to ancient practice, and show the affinity of his mind towards the modern style of drama. One of these novelties was the tragicomedy, of which he has left us a remarkable example in the Alcestis. According to the prevailing Greek custom the distinction between tragedy and comedy was rigorously accentuated; and although both Aeschylus and Sophocles had occasionally relaxed the tragic intensity of their dramas by semi-humorous scenes, yet a few isolated passages of this kind were not sufficient to modify the general tone of their works. Euripides, in the majority of his plays, follows their example, introducing comic touches only at rare intervals. But in the Alcestis he has gone much further, and created a new kind of drama, in which the pathetic and the humorous are deliberately interspersed. Scenes of tragedy are followed by scenes of comedy, just as in real life; and the play is the first example in literary history of that type of composition, which was afterwards perfected by the Elizabethan and Spanish dramatists, and which endeavours to give a faithful representation of the chequered character of human existence.

The Helena is another of these novel types of drama. It belongs to a class otherwise unknown to ancient tragedy, but highly popular among the Elizabethans, and of which the Midsummer Night's Dream is one of the best examples. Plays

[1] Nauck, p. 392.

[2] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 53 *τῶν καλλίστων Εὐριπίδου δραμάτων ἡ Ἀνδρομέδα.* For the fragments see Nauck, pp. 392–404.

of this kind, for which there is no special name, are differentiated from regular tragedies by the airy fancy and lightness of their tone. They have many of the characteristics of a fairy tale. The mind is transported from the solemn realities of existence into a delightful region of wonderland, where nothing is impossible, and where strange figures and marvellous adventures meet us at every turn. A dreamy charm pervades this ideal world. The passions lose their usual violence, and are softened and subdued into a dim reflexion of the passions upon earth. The complications, also, which arise have no serious significance, and there is a feeling throughout that the various dangers and difficulties will be surmounted, and that all will come right in the end.

The legends of the Greek mythology, with their strange and fanciful incidents, offered attractive materials for this style of treatment, though they were seldom so handled by the Greeks. Part of the Odyssey, it is true, is conceived in this vein. But in Aeschylus and Sophocles the lighter and more imaginative aspect of the fable disappears beneath the moral grandeur and earnestness of the general colouring. Euripides was the first to compose a tragedy in this manner, and his Helena is based throughout on marvel and fantasy. The bewilderment caused by the real and the phantom Helen, the astonishment of the old mariner when he sees his mistress floating away through the air, the grief of the real Helen on account of her ridiculous birth from an egg, and her indignation at the disgrace which has been brought upon her name by the vagaries of the phantom, are all conceived in a light and playful spirit, which recalls some of the most graceful productions of the Elizabethan stage.

These various changes and developments in the style of dramatic composition are accompanied by a corresponding modification in its ethical tone. Greek tragedy, in its origin, had been an act of worship, performed in honour of the gods; and its sacred character had been preserved and intensified by Aeschylus, in whose hands it reached its greatest height of moral and religious impressiveness. But after the time of Aeschylus the growth of new ideas among the more cultivated

classes led to a gradual secularisation of the drama. The beginning of the process has already been traced in Sophocles, in whose tragedies the religious purpose, though still clearly felt, was no longer allowed to predominate. Euripides advances still further, and though prevented by custom from severing the outward connexion between religion and the stage, confines this connexion mainly to externals. His dramas, though exhibited, like those of Aeschylus and Sophocles, at the religious festivals, and though dealing with sacred subjects, are secular in tone. Their ethical significance is no longer expounded and emphasised in definite language. Euripides adopts a different method. Like Shakespeare, and most of the modern dramatists, he is content, at any rate in the majority of his plays, to paint some great scene of human passion and suffering, and to leave it to produce its own effect upon the audience.

As a consequence of this change of standpoint, and this concentration of interest upon the facts of human nature, rather than upon the problems of religion, a new kind of dramatic situation was gradually evolved, which has been widely imitated in modern times. Aeschylus and Sophocles had been accustomed to regard man mainly in his relation to the divine laws of the universe. They had exhibited him as the victim of overpowering external forces, and as wrestling ineffectually against the weight of destiny. Euripides gave a fresh development to tragedy, by transferring the conflict to the human soul, and by portraying the struggle of mankind, not with the visitations of fate, but with the evil suggestions of their own mind. He was the first to let us behold, in the recesses of the heart, the conflict between duty and passion, and between virtue and vice. Such is the motive of the Medea. Medea, a woman of passionate and masculine temper, has been goaded to madness by the desertion of Jason. As she broods over her wrongs, a horrible idea takes possession of her mind—the idea of murdering her offspring in order to be revenged upon her husband. She sees the hatefulness of the deed, is melted to tears by the sight of her children, tries to draw back, and to thrust the dark suggestion out of her thoughts. But it is in vain; her evil

genius at length prevails, and she throws herself upon her fate. This spectacle of a soul at war with itself was a new revelation to the Greek stage of the fifth century; but it has supplied the basis of some of the greatest of modern tragedies, such as Hamlet, Macbeth, and Faust.

(2) *Modern Criticisms.*

The various novelties introduced by Euripides, like most great changes in art and literature, failed at first to secure general approbation. By many of the contemporary Greeks they were regarded as a degradation of the dramatic art; and they were attacked with unsparing vigour by Aristophanes, who represented, in literary as well as in political questions, the feeling of conservative Athens. Eventually, however, the new type of tragedy prevailed, and during the later period of Greek civilisation Euripides became the most popular of the tragic poets[1]. But in modern times, with the revival of learning, the tide set once more in the opposite direction. Euripides was dethroned from his position of pre-eminence, and his writings were assailed, by successive generations of scholars, with all the violence and prejudice of the Old Comedy. This spirit of depreciation may be said to have reached its culminating point at the beginning of the present century, when it became the fashion among critics to find little in Euripides but what was mean and contemptible, and to speak of him as a 'bad man,' and a 'bad citizen,' who had mistaken his vocation in devoting himself to tragic poetry[2]. Exaggerations of this kind naturally led to a certain reaction, and the criticisms of the present day are no longer characterised by the same blind animosity. Yet even now some trace of the old feeling remains, and it is rare to find the genius of Euripides as cordially appreciated as that of Aeschylus and Sophocles. The tendency is still to emphasise his defects, rather than to admire his excellencies.

One cause of this hostility is the influence of Aristophanes,

[1] See § 10.

[2] Donaldson's Theatre of the Greeks, p. 90. Müller's Literature of Ancient Greece, p. 358. Schlegel's Dramatic Literature, Lectures 8–10.

whose incisive and persistent ridicule has undoubtedly acted as a bar to the just appreciation of Euripides. Another cause may be found in the fact that Euripides has been far less fortunate than the other tragic poets in regard to the preservation of his plays. The extant tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles are few in number, and consist mostly of masterpieces. The nineteen dramas of Euripides, on the other hand, though containing many specimens of his finest work, also include several plays which are clearly second-rate, and which were never held in high estimation even by the ancients themselves[1]. The critics have hardly made due allowance for this fact; their unfavourable estimate of his genius is based largely upon the consideration of his inferior productions; and there can be little doubt that if only a small selection of his greatest plays had survived, his reputation would have stood far higher at the present time.

The accusation most frequently brought against him is that of having impaired the ideal beauty of Greek tragedy by his realistic representation of the heroic legends. It is this characteristic of his poetry, more than anything else, which excited the contempt and ridicule of Aristophanes and the other comic poets, and which has supplied the foundation of most of the subsequent hostile criticism. Now, as far as the contemporaries of Euripides are concerned, there is not much ground for surprise in the fact that his novel creations should have aroused the keenest opposition. The Greeks of the fifth century, who had been accustomed to the ideal splendour of the Sophoclean stage, and who felt a traditional veneration for the antique fables, were naturally, in many cases, startled and repelled by the frank and undisguised humanity with which the old mythical heroes were invested by Euripides. But a modern critic, being far removed from contemporary influences, and being able to take a wider survey of the question, has less justification for re-echoing these complaints. Change and development, it has often been pointed out, are essential elements

[1] See p. 282.

of continuous vitality; and the art which ceases to advance, and which settles down into stereotyped forms, soon begins to lose its inspiration, and to degenerate into lifeless mannerism. It was inevitable, therefore, that ancient tragedy, if it was to fulfil its natural course, and not to perish of premature decay, should submit to this universal law. Nor can it be said that the particular change introduced by Euripides—the substitution of the actual for the ideal—was of a wanton and unnatural character. On the contrary, it was one which is strictly in accordance with the usual process of evolution in such matters. The general tendency of artistic development, as shown by the history of every national art and literature, is to begin by pursuing the grand and lofty and mysterious, but to end with the accurate imitation of real life. Sometimes, no doubt, there is a reaction; just as in English literature the realistic novels of Fielding were succeeded by the romances of Scott, and the poetry of Pope and Dryden by that of Keats and Shelley. But in spite of temporary ebbs and flows, the general set of the current is in this direction. Euripides, therefore, in obeying this universal impulse, showed his instinctive appreciation of the conditions under which he had to work. The ideal tragedy had run its course, the time for the more realistic drama had arrived. That he should have seen this fact so clearly, and should have used his opportunity, is a proof of his genius and sagacity, rather than a just subject for censure. The point then for critics to determine is, not so much whether he was right in changing the tone of tragedy, as whether he was able to accomplish this necessary change with judgement and success.

Most readers, if they were to consider the question without prejudice, would probably answer it in the affirmative. The realism of Euripides is not of that extreme type which often flourishes during the latest epochs of literary history, and which may justly be regarded as offensive in subject, and dull in treatment. Euripides shows no preference for what is sordid or repulsive. Although at times, in his desire to be faithful to the facts of nature, he introduces scenes and characters which his predecessors had avoided, yet the brighter side of

things is by no means ignored. Nor is he satisfied with a merely photographic and uninteresting reproduction of the events of ordinary existence. His realism is of a poetical and imaginative kind, like that of the Elizabethans, but more refined and fastidious. His varied pictures of human life, whether in its homely and familiar aspects, or in its scenes of violent and absorbing passion, are lifted into a higher region by the grace and radiant beauty of the language and the poetry. Sometimes he is less successful than at others. In the Electra, for example, the attempt to humanise the old legend by familiar touches produces a feeling of incongruity which is not altogether pleasing. But in his greatest plays, such as the Alcestis and the Medea, no such objection can be raised. The experiment, in these cases, is justified by the result; and the heroic stories, though stripped of their superhuman dignity and grandeur, lose none of their beauty and impressiveness in the new guise under which they are made to appear.

It has often been asserted that Euripides makes his characters viler than was necessary even for a realist in art, and that he excels chiefly in the delineation of the baser side of human nature[1]. As for the latter statement, it is sufficiently refuted by the mere mention of such creations as Ion, and Alcestis, and Hercules, of which it is impossible to deny the beauty and nobility. The charge of unnecessary vileness is less devoid of foundation. Euripides, it must be allowed, sometimes shows a kind of cynical delight in dissecting and exposing the meaner qualities of the heart; and in one or two plays, in which Spartan characters predominate, he has apparently been induced by national animosity to exhibit them in an odious and unnatural light[2]. But apart from certain special instances of this kind, it can hardly be contended that the general tone of his plays is cynical and offensive, or that he goes beyond the limits of truth

[1] Cp. Aristot. Poet. c. 15 ἔστι δὲ παράδειγμα πονηρίας μὲν ἤθους μὴ ἀναγκαῖον οἷον ὁ Μενέλαος ὁ ἐν τῷ Ὀρέστῃ. Dion. Hal., Vett. Script. Cens. 2. 11 καὶ οὐχὶ τὰ γενικὰ καὶ μεγαλοφυῆ τῶν προσώπων ἤθη καὶ πάθη, καθάπερ Σοφοκλῆς, κατώρθωσεν· εἰ δέ τι ἄσεμνον καὶ ἄνανδρον καὶ ταπεινόν, σφόδρα ἰδεῖν ἐστιν αὐτὸν ἠκριβωκότα. These charges are repeated by most modern critics.

[2] E.g. in the Andromache and the Orestes.

and justice in his portraits of vice. Indeed, his bad characters are usually drawn with peculiar insight; they are seldom mere incarnations of wickedness, like the tyrants of Alfieri, exciting only disgust by their unredeemed villainy. Their hatefulness, as a rule, is skilfully relieved by occasional flashes of better feeling. Jason, to take an example, appears at first as a monster of ingratitude and selfishness; yet even in his case the passionate affection which he displays for his children in the final scene goes far to win the sympathy of the reader. Medea and Agamemnon are further instances of those mixed characters, in which good and evil are struggling for mastery; and in the representation of such conflicting tendencies Euripides is perhaps without a rival among the ancient dramatists.

Another feature in Euripides which has excited much criticism is his vivid representation of the sexual passion. Aristophanes apparently considered the whole subject as unfit for tragedy[1]. Modern critics have not ventured to go so far as this; indeed, it would have been impossible for them to do so, unless they were prepared to condemn most modern poetry and fiction. Nor have they been able to charge Euripides with giving undue prominence to this passion, since as a matter of fact the number of his love dramas is comparatively small[2]. But they accuse him of having selected myths which a refined taste would have avoided, and they repeat the complaints of Aristophanes about 'unholy marriages' and 'incestuous women[3].' As for this objection, it is true that some of the fables which he chose to dramatise appear repugnant to modern feeling[4]. But

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1043–1055 ΑΙΣ. ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας, | οὐδ' οἷδ' οὐδεὶς ἥντιν' ἐρῶσαν πώποτ' ἐποίησα γυναῖκα . . . ΕΥ. πότερον δ' οὐκ ὄντα λόγον τοῦτον περὶ τῆς Φαίδρας ξυνέθηκα; | ΑΙΣ. μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὄντ'. ἀλλ' ἀποκρύπτειν χρὴ τὸ πονηρὸν τόν γε ποιητήν, | καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν.

[2] As far as can be ascertained, there were only about eleven plays in which this motive was at all prominent, viz., the Hippolytus and the Medea, which have been preserved; and (of the lost plays) the Aeolus, Alope, Andromeda, Auge, Cressae, Cretes, Melanippe, Stheneboea, and Phoenix. See Nauck, Trag. Graec. Fragmenta.

[3] Aristoph. Ran. 849 ὦ Κρητικὰς μὲν συλλέγων μονῳδίας, | γάμους δ' ἀνοσίους εἰσφέρων εἰς τὴν τέχνην. Ibid. 1043 Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας. Ibid. 1079–1081 οὐ προαγωγοὺς κατέδειξ' οὗτος, | καὶ τικτούσας ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς, | καὶ μιγνυμένας τοῖσιν ἀδελφοῖς;

[4] E. g. the story of Pasiphae, which

in such cases everything depends upon the manner of the treatment. To take a well-known instance. Nothing, at first sight, could appear more loathsome than the plot of the Oedipus Tyrannus; yet it is out of this very story that Sophocles has constructed one of the finest of existing tragedies. Now most of those plays of Euripides which were censured by Aristophanes as immoral have perished, and we are no longer able to judge for ourselves as to their general tone. It would be unfair therefore to assume, merely on the testimony of Aristophanes, that there was anything in their contents which could excite disgust. If we confine our attention to the extant dramas, the reverse is found to be the case. The Hippolytus, the tragedy in which love is most prominent, is a remarkable example of the poet's tact in dealing with these matters. Phaedra is there represented as the victim of the gods, overpowered by a fatal passion for her stepson, which she struggles in vain to overcome, and which she is too full of shame to avow. Her secret is at length made known, not by herself, but by the officiousness of the nurse. Whereupon, in the agony of her despair, she puts an end to her life, while striving to save her honour by a false accusation. The plot could hardly have been handled with greater delicacy; and to appreciate the reserve of Euripides, it is only necessary to compare the Phaedra drawn by Seneca, with her unrestrained licentiousness and her shameless avowals of passion. This example, therefore, should deter us from trusting to the prejudiced criticisms of Aristophanes, in cases where there is no direct evidence.

Lastly, Euripides is accused of having lowered the tone of tragedy by depriving it of its moral significance. His dramas, it is said, belong to that later stage of art, in which Nature takes the place of Religion, and in which the object of the poet is to paint the phenomena of existence, rather than to enforce a definite moral creed. This latter fact is one which cannot be denied. Euripides represents the feelings of an age in which religious belief, among the educated Greeks, had lost its

was the subject of the Cretes; and the incestuous passion of Macareus for his sister Canace, which was dramatised in the Aeolus.

potency. But to contend, on this account, that his tragedies are devoid of serious purpose, and that they are mere motiveless studies of human passion, is an exaggeration of the truth. It is a criticism based on the consideration of his lesser plays, to the exclusion of the greatest. Some of his compositions, no doubt, may seem to justify the charge. Such plays as the Helena, the Phoenissae, and the Troades have no pretensions to moral depth and grandeur, the sole aim of the poet, in these and similar works, being to entertain the audience by an effective series of striking situations. But the finest plays of Euripides are hardly less profound and suggestive, in their own fashion, than those of his predecessors; and though their significance is not always enforced in words, it cannot fail to make itself felt. The heroic endurance of calamity in the Hercules Furens, the clash of opposing beliefs in the Bacchae, and the struggle between love and vengeance in the Medea, are great and moving spectacles, of which it is impossible not to perceive the ethical impressiveness, unless we deny such qualities to plays like Hamlet and Othello.

The hostility shown towards Euripides by the majority of scholars and critics is counterbalanced, to a large extent, by the enthusiasm of the poets in his favour. The poets have been less biased by *a priori* considerations as to the proper attributes of Greek tragedy; and the modernness of spirit in Euripides, so far from being a rock of offence, has served as a bond of sympathy, and has appealed to their sensibilities with greater force than the statuesque severity of the older tragedy. Hence Euripides has generally been the favourite with modern authors and dramatists, and his influence on European literature has been far more extensive than that of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Milton's admiration for his plays is well known. Racine was one of his most constant imitators[1]. Alfieri, after reading through the whole of the existing Greek tragedies, came to the conclusion that the Alcestis was the most beautiful and touching of them all[2]. The Medea was one of the few

[1] The Andromaque, Iphigénie, and Phèdre are all based on the corresponding plays of Euripides.

[2] Alfieri, Schiarimento del Traduttore

ancient dramas which aroused the enthusiasm of Byron[1]. Goethe owed the idea of his Helena and his Iphigenie to Euripides, and expressed in various conversations his admiration for the poet. So little did he approve of the criticisms of contemporary scholars, that the unfairness of their attacks provoked him to unusual bitterness. 'Schlegel's own little person,' he remarks, 'was not sufficient to comprehend and appreciate such lofty natures'; and elsewhere he observes that 'all those who denied the sublime to Euripides were either poor wretches incapable of understanding such sublimity, or shameless charlatans who, by their presumption, wished to make more of themselves, and did make more of themselves, than they really were[2].'

(3) *Influence of Rhetoric and Philosophy.*

The innovations of Euripides which we have hitherto been discussing were natural and inevitable developments, which it is unfair to regard as a degradation of the art of tragedy. It is true that by these changes of tone much was sacrificed, yet at the same time much was gained; and for many minds the nature and passion of Euripides will have greater attractions than the majesty of Aeschylus and the idealism of Sophocles. But there are certain other features in the tragedy of Euripides which must undoubtedly be regarded as symptoms of decline. Foremost among these is the occasional subjectivity of the treatment, a fault to which dramatic composition, in its later stages, has always been liable. Euripides, as we have seen, was a man of varied interests, devoted to philosophy, and versed in speculations[3]. At times he is inclined to introduce his political and philosophical opinions, when they are not required by the necessities of the drama; and to utilise his characters as a vehicle for the expression of his personal

su Alceste Seconda. Racine was also of the same opinion (see Patin's Euripide, i. p. 225).

[1] Byron's Works, vol. iv. p. 67.

[2] Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann (Oxenford's translation), vol. i. p. 377; vol. ii. p. 337.

[3] See p. 206.

meditations. His personages have a habit of moralising, in and out of season; and the habit is not confined to those of most importance. All of them, as Aristophanes remarks, are equally eloquent—wives, slaves, masters, virgins, and old women[1]. The nurse in the Hippolytus, for example, discourses on immortality in the style of Heracleitus, and on love in the style of Empedocles; and observes, not without complacency, that 'length of life has taught her many things[2].'

This practice, when carried to excess, is destructive of dramatic reality. We cannot help seeing, behind the persons of the drama, the figure of the poet himself. Many instances might be cited from Euripides. Sometimes whole scenes are devoted to disquisitions of this kind, and the actors, for the time being, convert themselves into a sort of debating society, and discuss such questions as the relative advantages of monarchy and democracy, or of light and heavy infantry[3]. Sometimes, again, in the midst of a moving situation, one of the characters, instead of speaking the language of natural passion, delivers a philosophical lecture. Thus when Adrastus has uttered his piteous appeal for help, Theseus replies by a discourse on the blessings of human life, the ingratitude of mankind, the constitution of states, and the excellence of the middle classes[4]. Perhaps the most glaring instance of this failing is to be found in the Electra, when the body of Aegisthus is brought in, and Electra vents her hatred in a speech. But there is little real passion in her utterances. She meditates on the folly of unequal marriages, the instability of wealth, and the vanity of physical beauty; and is only prevented from discussing

[1] Ran. 948 ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπῶν οὐδὲν παρῆκ' ἂν ἀργόν, | ἀλλ' ἔλεγεν ἡ γυνή τέ μοι χὠ δοῦλος οὐδὲν ἧττον, | χὠ δεσπότης χἠ παρθένος χἠ γραῦς ἄν.

[2] Hipp. 190–198, 252, 447–450.

[3] Suppl. 399–462, Herc. Fur. 151–203. Cp. the discussion in the Antiope (Nauck, p. 413 foll.) on the relative advantages of the practical and the speculative life.

[4] Suppl. 195–245. Cp. Hec. 592–603 (Hecuba on education), El. 367–379 (Orestes on courage), Iph. Aul. 919–931 (Achilles on moderation). Cp. also Nauck, p. 511 for the fragment of Melanippe's philosophical disquisition, which was censured by Aristotle as inappropriate (Poet. c. 15 τοῦ δὲ ἀπρεποῦς καὶ μὴ ἁρμόττοντος . . . παράδειγμα . . . ἡ τῆς Μελανίππης ῥῆσις).

more delicate questions by the reflexion that they are 'unsuitable to a maiden[1].'

Another danger to which the drama is exposed is the encroachment of rhetoric upon the province of poetry, and the substitution of oratorical eloquence for genuine emotion. Among the Greeks, who were the inventors of formal oratory, and to whom the love of debate was a second nature, the temptation to succumb to this influence was peculiarly strong. Even Sophocles had hardly escaped the contagion. But in Euripides the evil has grown to such dangerous proportions, that it begins to threaten the vitality of the drama. Euripides possessed by nature a remarkable faculty for rhetoric, and as a master of eloquence was placed by the ancients on a level with the greatest orators that had ever lived[2]. He had also acquired in no small degree that love of dexterous argumentation and verbal sophistry, which was becoming fashionable in the Athens of the fifth century. Not unfrequently he exhibits this dexterity when it is clearly out of place. Orestes, when imploring the assistance of Menelaus, endeavours to show that 'as Agamemnon did wrong for Menelaus on account of Helen's wrong-doing, therefore Menelaus should do wrong for Agamemnon on account of Orestes' wrong-doing'; and Jason, when reproached by Medea for the ill return he has given to her love, brings forward the subtle theory that she loved him, not of her own free-will, but under the compulsion of her passions[3]. These displays of sophistry are alien to the spirit of tragedy, and exposed Euripides, not without justice, to the ridicule of the comic poets[4].

But the baneful effect of his rhetorical aptitude becomes more conspicuous when whole scenes and situations are conceived in

[1] El. 907–956.

[2] Quint. Inst. Orat. 10. 1. 68 'dicendo ac respondendo cuilibet eorum, qui fuerunt in foro diserti, comparandus.'

[3] Orest. 640 foll., Med. 522 foll.

[4] His sophistry and over-subtlety are frequently ridiculed by Aristophanes, e.g. Ran. 828 καταλεπτολογεῖν, 841 στωμυλιοσυλλεκτάδης, 892 αἰθήρ, ἐμὸν βόσκημα, καὶ γλώττης στρόφιγξ, | καὶ ξύνεσι καὶ μυκτῆρες ὀσφραντήριοι, | ὀρθῶς μ' ἐλέγχειν ὧν ἂν ἅπτωμαι λόγων, 956 λεπτῶν τε κανόνων ἐσβολὰς ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούς, | νοεῖν, ὁρᾶν, ξυνιέναι, στρέφειν, ἐρᾶν, τεχνάζειν.

the style of the law-courts and the public assembly. On such occasions his characters drop their proper personality, and become practised advocates and parliamentary debaters. They fashion their speeches on the approved models, beginning with a formal preface, then dissecting the adversary's arguments, then launching out into personal invective, and concluding the whole with a glowing peroration. In such exhibitions there is no dramatic interest or revelation of character; though magnificent specimens of rhetoric, they appear incongruous as portions of a tragedy.

No better example could be cited than one of the final scenes of the Troades, where Helen, a prisoner among the Trojan captives, is confronted for the first time, after ten years of separation, with the husband she had abandoned. The situation is one of intense and pathetic interest, and few poets could have treated it with greater power than Euripides in his more inspired moments. But as it is, he has converted it into a mere forensic display. We seem to be present in an ordinary law-court. Menelaus is the presiding judge. Hecuba delivers the speech for the prosecution, and accuses Helen of adultery. Helen conducts her own defence, and endeavours to prove that her conduct was inspired by heaven. Menelaus, after listening to both arguments with judicial gravity, reserves judgement for the present, and orders Helen to be conveyed to Argos, where sentence will be pronounced[1].

These two qualities of the Euripidean drama, the prevalence of rhetoric and philosophy, are indisputable blemishes and symptoms of degeneracy. But it should be remembered, in justice to Euripides, that it is only in some of the inferior plays that they so far predominate as to interfere with the general effect of the composition. In his greater tragedies, though still apparent, they are far less conspicuous, and their presence is hardly felt in the midst of splendid scenes of natural pathos. They resemble trifling flaws on the surface of some great and beautiful work of art. Nor can it be said that they are faults

[1] Troad. 906–1059.

which grew and developed with the advancing years of the poet, since many of his latest productions, such as the Bacchae, the Ion, and the Iphigeneia in Tauris, are singularly free from these defects. Their predominance in other tragedies appears to have been due more to hastiness of composition than to any real decay in the feeling for dramatic truth. Writing at times merely to satisfy the demands of the stage, and without much inspiration, he seems to have been tempted, by his command of rhetoric and sententious commonplace, to fill out the substance of the play with these forensic combats and philosophical disquisitions. Nor should we forget that they were probably regarded as anything but defects by his audience. The set debates and parliamentary eloquence, which appear tedious to a modern reader, were no doubt rapturously applauded in the Athenian theatre. And the graceful and easy form in which he brought philosophy before the notice of the public was one of the sources of his popularity; and he was called the 'philosopher of the stage,' not as a reproach, but as a compliment[1].

§ 3. *Choice and Structure of Plots.*

The plays of Euripides, as already observed, are all taken from the old mythology, in accordance with the sacred traditions of the drama, which it was impossible to disobey. But there is no reason to suppose that Euripides felt any inclination to depart from previous example in this respect. The ancient legends of Greece supplied an infinite variety of subjects, admirably adapted for dramatic treatment; and apart from their theatrical value, they appear to have possessed, merely on their own account, a peculiar fascination for his mind. His interest in antiquarian lore is shown on many occasions. He introduces into his tragedies far more mythology than is required by the necessities of the plot, and delights to display his minute acquaintance with the details of legendary tradition.

[1] Clem. Alex. Strom. p. 688 ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς φιλόσοφος. Vitruvius, 8, praef. § 1 'philosophus scenicus.'

He generally begins each play with a long piece of genealogy, in which he traces the descent of his characters, step by step, through a fabulous line of gods and heroes. In the same way, at the end, he is careful to predict their future history—their marriages, settlements, and descendants. Curious old customs and local traditions—such as the golden necklace of snakes worn by Athenian children, the strange sacrifices to Artemis at Halae and Brauron, and the tripod and buried knife at Delphi—are interwoven into the texture of his dramas in much the same way as Scott, in his romances, has utilised the antiquities of Scotland[1]. Sometimes this antiquarianism is dragged into scenes where to a modern reader it seems otiose and uninteresting. Thus Orestes, when telling his sister the moving story of his wanderings, has a frigid digression on the Athenian Feast of Pitchers, which was instituted in memory of his adventures, and which he cannot refrain from describing at length, in spite of the manifest anachronism[2].

In his choice of myths Euripides follows, to a large extent, the footsteps of previous poets. The legends of Thebes and Argos, with their varied stories about the houses of Oedipus, Thyestes, and Acrisius, supply him with numerous subjects. Like Sophocles, too, he shows special partiality for the fables of his native country, and takes pleasure in celebrating the achievements of the Athenian heroes, Theseus and Erectheus. But the well-worn stories of the Trojan Cycle were less to his taste, and only a fifth of his plays are taken from this source. On the other hand he often wanders into fresh fields of mythology, in search of subjects adapted to the new style of tragedy; and many tales of violent passion or of romantic adventure, such as those about Phaethon, Cresphontes, and Bellerophon, were handled by him for the first time[3].

The facts of mythology are manipulated with considerable

[1] Ion 23–25, Iph. Taur. 1450–1467, Suppl. 1196–1212. Cp. also Hipp. 1423–1430 (the choruses at Troezen in honour of Hippolytus), El. 1265–1269 (the manner of voting in the Areopagus), Herc. Fur. 416 (Hippolyta's belt preserved at Mycenae), 1326–1335 (the worship of Hercules in Attica) &c.

[2] Iph. Taur. 947–960.

[3] See the list of his plays, classified according to their subjects, in Appendix II.

freedom, when it suits his purpose[1]. In some cases the same myth appears in a totally different shape in different plays. Thus in the Troades the Helen for whom the Greeks are contending is the real Helen, the daughter of Leda, while in the Helena she is a mere phantom, created by the gods[2]. Often, again, a myth is amplified and developed to such a large extent as to become practically the invention of Euripides; and the stories of Ion, and of Iphigeneia among the Taurians, are brilliant examples of his skill and fertility in devising new mythology[3]. Both Aeschylus and Sophocles, it is true, had treated the old legends in a free and original manner; but their innovations were far less daring and extensive. Euripides, on many occasions, was driven to these novelties by the necessity of his position, and the fact that his subjects had already been dramatised. In such cases the desire to be original, and the fear of merely reproducing the old situations, induced him to give a new complexion to the fable; and it was probably some such motive as this which caused him to marry Electra to a rustic, and to ascribe the blindness of Oedipus, not to his own hand, but to the vengeance of his enemies[4].

In point of structure the plots of Euripides, unlike those of Sophocles, differ considerably from one another, and follow no fixed rule, but oscillate between the old and the new. A large number of his tragedies are composed in the simple and majestic style of Sophocles. They exhibit, perhaps, more intricacy and variety of incident, but the general conception is the same, the action moving forward, with stately and inevitable progress, towards a fatal issue which is foreseen more or less clearly from the first. There is no attempt to

[1] Cp. Schol. Hec. 3 πολλάκις δὲ ὁ Εὐριπίδης αὐτοσχεδιάζει ἐν ταῖς γενεαλογίαις.

[2] In the same way in the Phoenissae the blindness of Oedipus is the result of his own act, in the Oedipus it was ascribed to the vengeance of the friends of Laius (Phoen. 1613, Frag. 541). In the Orestes it is said that Neoptolemus will never marry Hermione, in the Andromache they are man and wife (Orest. 1653).

[3] See the notices of these plays at the end of the chapter; and also the notices of the Helena and the Hercules Furens.

[4] Frag. 541. Cp. also Argum. Soph. Ant., whence it appears that in the Antigone of Euripides the heroine escaped with her life, and was married to Haemon.

perplex the audience, or to stimulate their curiosity by concealing the result. The interest lies, not in rapid turns and unexpected revolutions, but in the variety of the passions and characters, and in the pathos of the approaching doom. To this class belong such plays as the Bacchae, the Hippolytus, and the Medea. The dramas of this type are perhaps the finest in Euripides, and are certainly the most in consonance with the genius of Greek tragedy. The simple directness of the plot and the earnestness and concentration of purpose produce, as in Sophocles, an effect of indescribable power, which would only be impaired by greater complexity of treatment. This point may be illustrated by a comparison of the Hippolytus of Euripides with the Phèdre of Racine. The Phèdre is far more elaborate in structure. The main course of the action is diversified by the supposed death of Thesée, and by his unexpected return, which give rise to various developments unknown to the Greek tragedy. Numerous side issues are also introduced, such as the political intrigues concerning the succession to the throne, and the mutual affection of Hippolyte and Aricie. But in spite of the ingenuity of the construction, and the splendour of the execution, the general result is much less impressive; and the grandeur of the spectacle in the Hippolytus, where fate advances on its two victims with unrelenting strides, is obscured, rather than intensified, by the variety of interests and the rapid alternations of fortune.

Euripides, however, was not always content with the simple structure of the older tragedy; and in several of his plays he has developed a more complex type of plot, which differs but little from that of the modern theatre. In these dramas the element of curiosity begins, for the first time, to hold a prominent place. The spectators, instead of being taken into the confidence of the poet from the first, and allowed to foresee the general course of the action, are purposely kept in the dark until the very close; and the obscurity in which the final issue is involved forms one of the leading attractions of the play. The Ion is a fine example of such a plot. The story is as follows. Creusa, having borne to Apollo a son called Ion,

whom she had exposed at his birth, comes to Delphi to inquire about his fate. The first person she meets is Ion himself, who has become one of the ministers of the temple. Mother and son enter into conversation, and appear at first sight to be on the point of discovering the tie by which they are connected; but various obstacles and misunderstandings intervene, and eventually Creusa, misled by a deceptive oracle, plots the assassination of her unknown son. Ion discovers the plot, seizes his mother, and avows his determination to put her to death. It now seems as though Creusa's fate is sealed, and as though nothing could save her life, unless her relationship with Ion is brought to light. But it has been expressly announced in the prologue, by Apollo himself, that this relationship is to be kept a secret. Hence the issue is full of doubt and perplexity. However, it turns out that in this case the prologue has been used for the purpose of putting the audience on the wrong track, and intensifying the excitement of the conclusion. Apollo suddenly changes his plan; the identity of mother and son is revealed at the critical moment; they fall into each other's arms, and all ends happily.

This play, with its wilful misleading of the spectators, and its rapid changes of situation, offers a striking contrast to the simplicity of the older drama. The Orestes, again, displays the same characteristics, the interest of the plot being centred mainly in the desperate efforts of the hero to escape from what seems to be inevitable destruction. These two tragedies, together with others of the same class, are admirable specimens of dramatic skill; but they hardly, perhaps, attain to the greatness of the simpler dramas. The motive is less deep, and the tone less serious; moreover, the desire to excite surprise and curiosity is allowed at times to override every other consideration. Thus in the Ion the character of Creusa, which at first arouses our sympathy, is sacrificed for the sake of a powerful situation; and her atrocious resolve to murder Ion, though it leads to interesting complications, lowers her in the eyes of the spectators. In the Orestes, in the same way, the brutal design on Helen, while giving a new direction to the plot,

extinguishes our compassion for the sufferings of the brother and sister. But plays of this kind were undoubtedly effective on the stage, and eventually became the regular models for dramatic construction. They were imitated, and still further elaborated, by the comedy of Athens and Rome, and so passed, in course of time, into the drama of modern Europe.

The majority of the tragedies of Euripides may be ranged under one or other of the two classes which have just been described. But there are several, as might have been expected, which present less distinctive features, and which have something in common with both types of composition. Of these transitional dramas one of the finest is the Iphigeneia in Tauris —a play which combines, to a large extent, the simple impressiveness of the older tragedy with the intricacy and variety of the modern.

As regards the unity of the action—one of the most essential qualities of ancient tragedy—the practice of Euripides is also very unequal. In his greatest works he observes this rule with all the strictness of Sophocles. Irrelevant episodes are carefully excluded, the attention is concentrated on a single object, and the action moves continuously forward towards the conclusion, whether that conclusion be anticipated or concealed. But many of his plays are constructed with less care, and may be described as 'episodic.' They consist of a brilliant series of scenes and spectacles, but lack any vital connecting principle. The incidents, instead of being bound together by a continuous chain of cause and effect, have often little mutual relationship beyond the fact that they happened at the same time; and the tragic interest, in such cases, is impaired and interrupted by the want of coherence between the parts. This defect is nowhere more prominent than in the Troades, a play which is composed of a mere sequence of pictures, illustrating the misfortunes of the Trojan women after the capture of their city. The lamentations of Hecuba, the ravings of Cassandra, the despair of Andromache, and the pleadings of Helen, occupy the stage in successive scenes; but there is no forward movement or advance towards a definite issue, and the general impression is

monotonous and uninteresting. The Phoenissae, though a much superior play, suffers from the same fault. Few subjects could be more tragic than the fatal feud between the two brothers; but the absorbing interest of the central situation is obscured by numerous accessory details, with which the tragedy is so much overloaded, that it resembles a chronicle of the siege of Thebes. The same criticism also applies to plays like the Hecuba and the Andromache, in which the action is divided into two successive portions, unconnected with one another except by the fact that the same person is concerned in both of them—a superficial kind of link, which fails to give artistic unity to the piece.

In all that concerns the details of composition Euripides shows, by his criticisms on other poets, that he was well aware of the demands of dramatic probability. He frequently censures the lapses of Aeschylus in these matters, pointing out the inappropriateness of the long narratives in the Septem, and the futility of the recognition scene in the Choephori [1]. But he is not altogether free from the same defects himself, and his plays are seldom constructed with the careful and flawless plausibility of Sophocles. Occasionally he recurs to the simple methods of the older poets, introducing characters who have no connexion with the plot, merely to convey a certain necessary piece of information. The appearances of Teucer in the Helena, and of Aegeus in the Medea, are of this casual and episodic nature [2]. Not unfrequently, too, he is tempted to disregard the probabilities of the case for the sake of a dramatic situation or a telling speech. In addition to the instances already given, we may mention, as an example, that scene in the Ion, where the messenger is hastening after Creusa with breathless speed, to inform her of the design upon her life. But meeting the chorus on his way, he appears to forget his purpose, and loiters behind in order to entertain them with a picturesque and detailed narrative of all the circumstances [3]. In one point, however—in the observance of unity of time—Euripides

[1] Suppl. 846–856, El. 518–544. [2] Hel. 68, Med. 663.
[3] Ion 1106 foll.

is no less careful than Sophocles; and all his plays, with the exception of the Supplices, are contained within the limits of a single day[1].

In mastery of dramatic situation Euripides has rarely been excelled. Like Aeschylus and Sophocles, he thoroughly understands the requirements of the stage[2]. Especially effective is his treatment of those scenes, so much commended by Aristotle, in which some fatal deed is about to be perpetrated through ignorance. Merope standing over the sleeping body of her son, whom she takes for an enemy, and raising her axe to strike, while the aged servant is hastening to the rescue, was a situation which, as Plutarch tells us, used to electrify the ancient audiences[3]. His fondness, too, for spectacular display is a noticeable feature in his dramas, and one in which he resembles Aeschylus more than Sophocles. The frequency with which he begins his plays with a group of suppliants kneeling round an altar has often been pointed out[4]. He rejoices also in strange catastrophes and miraculous apparitions—in palaces shaken by sudden thunderstorms, and gods and heroes riding through the

[1] In the Supplices Theseus marches from Eleusis to Thebes, defeats the Thebans, and returns with the dead bodies of the chieftains, all within the space of about a hundred lines. The violation of the unity of time is of the same kind as in the Trachiniae of Sophocles, events which are transacted at a distance from the stage, and which are only made known by description, being regarded as outside the scope of the rule.

It is not necessary to assume a similar irregularity in the Andromache, unless we suppose that Orestes was present in person at the assassination of Neoptolemus. The decision of this point depends on the reading and interpretation of l. 1116, where see Paley's note.

[2] No doubt he superintended in person the production of his plays, like the other poets of that epoch. See the story in Plut. de Rat. Aud. c. 15 *Εὐριπίδης μὲν οὖν ὁ ποιητής, ὡς ὑπολέγοντος αὐτοῦ τοῖς χορευταῖς ᾠδήν τινα πεποιημένην ἐφ' ἁρμονίας, εἷς ἐγέλασεν, Εἰ μή τις, ἔφη, ἦς ἀναίσθητος καὶ ἀπαθής, οὐκ ἂν ἐγέλας ἐμοῦ μιξολυδιστὶ ᾄδοντος.*

[3] Aristot. Poet. c. 14 (speaking of the different kinds of recognition) *κράτιστον δὲ τὸ τελευταῖον, λέγω δὲ οἷον ἐν τῷ Κρεσφόντῃ ἡ Μερόπη μέλλει τὸν υἱὸν ἀποκτείνειν.* Plut. de Esu Carn. c. 5 *σκοπεῖ δὲ τὴν ἐν τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ Μερόπην ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν πέλεκυν ἀραμένην, ὅσον ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ κίνημα ποιεῖ συνεξορθιάζουσα φόβῳ, καὶ δέος μὴ φθάσῃ τὸν ἐπιλαμβανόμενον γέροντα καὶ τρώσῃ τὸ μειράκιον.* Cp. also the magnificent scene in the Iph. Taur., where Iphigeneia is preparing to sacrifice her brother; and that in the Ion, where Ion is about to take his mother's life.

[4] The Heracleidae, Supplices, Andromache, and Hercules Furens commence in this way.

air on winged steeds and mysterious cars[1]. The Supplices, in particular, is one long series of impressive spectacles. It opens with the group of matrons and attendants prostrate in supplication round the central figure of Aethra. Then comes the funeral procession, with the seven corpses on separate biers, and the solemn oration over the bodies of the slain. Then Evadne appears upon a rock, in an agony of grief, and hurls herself down into the midst of the funeral pyre. Finally the seven sons of the dead chieftains march on to the stage, arrayed in black, and bearing in urns the ashes of their fathers; and the play concludes with dirges and lamentations.

§ 4. *Innovations in the Form of Tragedy.*

In his treatment of the formal part of tragedy Euripides seldom deviates very widely from the type established by Sophocles. Apart from certain modifications in the lyrical element, which will be discussed later on, his principal innovation is the employment of prologues and of occasional epilogues. These epilogues (to consider them first) are a kind of supplementary narrative spoken at the end of the play by the 'deus ex machina.' The use of this contrivance in Euripides has been much misrepresented by the critics. It has generally been described as the last resort of an unskilful dramatist, when he is unable to find any other solution for the complexities of the plot. But as a matter of fact, out of the ten tragedies of Euripides in which it occurs, there are only two—the Hippolytus and the Orestes—where it is employed to untie the knots of the action[2]; and even in these two cases the same results might have been easily achieved by ordinary means. The safety of Orestes might have been ensured by the success of his design on Hermione; and the truth about Hippolytus might have been

[1] Cp. Bacch. 582 foll. (the palace of Pentheus shaken to its foundations amid thunder and lightning). Herc. Fur. 822 (the appearance of Iris and Lyssa on the roof of the palace). Med. 1321 (Medea in her car drawn by dragons). Frag. 124 (Perseus traversing the air on winged sandals). Frag. 306 (the ascent of Bellerophon on his winged steed).

[2] The following are the plays which conclude with a deus ex machina—the Orestes, Iphigeneia in Tauris, Ion, Helena, Andromache, Supplices, Electra, Bacchae, Rhesus, Hippolytus.

revealed by the confessions of the nurse. In the remaining plays it is not until the action has reached its proper conclusion, and the difficulties have been solved, that the introduction of the god takes place; and the object of his appearance is, not to unravel perplexities, but to deliver a sort of epilogue, and to predict the future history and fortunes of the various characters[1]. The contrivance gives Euripides an opportunity to round off the story at its close, by introducing all those antiquarian and legendary details in which he delighted.

That this was the real purpose of the 'deus ex machina' is proved very clearly by those plays in which, though the action is practically finished, some new and unnecessary incident is appended, merely to supply the god with an excuse for his intervention. Thus in the Iphigeneia in Tauris, when the brother and sister have successfully effected their escape, the play should naturally come to a conclusion; but Euripides causes a contrary wind to arise and blow them ashore again, in order that Athene may appear, and inform the spectators about the purification of Orestes, and the institution of the cult of Artemis at Halae and Brauron. In the Helena, in the same way, when Helen and Menelaus have accomplished their stratagem, the sudden anger of Theoclymenus against his sister is inserted by the poet, in order to give the Dioscuri an occasion to descend from heaven, and describe the future destinies of Helen.

These epilogues of Euripides are of varied merit. Sometimes, indeed, there is little trace of celestial splendour in the intervention of the deity, and his divine origin is revealed, more by the art of the machinist, than by the grandeur of the language[2]. His speech is like the final chapter of a novel; and his anxiety to let the audience know who will marry whom, where they will settle, and how they will thrive, produces a tame and frigid effect after the passion of the previous scenes. But in many cases the result is grand and imposing, as for instance in the Hippolytus, where

[1] This is one of the uses of the deus ex machina which is approved and recommended by Aristotle (Poet. c. 15) ἀλλὰ μηχανῇ χρηστέον ἐπὶ τὰ ἔξω τοῦ δράματος, ἢ ὅσα πρὸ τοῦ γέγονεν . . . ἢ ὅσα ὕστερον, ἃ δεῖται προαγορεύσεως καὶ ἀγγελίας· ἅπαντα γὰρ ἀποδίδομεν τοῖς θεοῖς ὁρᾶν.

[2] See Patin's Euripide, I. p. 68.

the speech of Athene, with its solemn rebukes and tender condolences, is tempered throughout by an air of serene and lofty tranquillity, such as befits the utterances of the immortal gods.

Occasionally, though no divine being is introduced, one of the characters in the tragedy takes his place, and delivers what is practically an epilogue. Thus in the final scene of the Medea, when the heroine informs Jason about his approaching death, about her own destiny, and about the choruses to be established at Corinth, her remarks, which have little dramatic propriety, are obviously inserted for the benefit of the spectators[1].

The prologue, as employed by Euripides, is a stately narrative at the commencement of the play, explaining the antecedent circumstances[2]. It differs from the modern prologue in this respect, that instead of being confessedly separated from the rest of the drama, and spoken by an actor in his own person, it is always delivered, either by one of the characters in the piece, or by some supernatural being, who, though taking no part in the subsequent action, is deeply interested in its course[3]. By such means an attempt is made to preserve some semblance of dramatic illusion. But in spite of this precaution the majority of these prologues are of a cold and formal character, their didactic purpose being plainly visible. At times, however, they are written with genuine feeling and passion, like the prologue of the nurse in the Medea, who comes forth into the open air to relieve her pent up emotions by 'telling earth and heaven the sorrows of her mistress[4].'

[1] Med. 1378–1388. The speech of Eurysthens at the end of the Heracleidae (1026–1044), with its description of his burial-place, of the oracle of Apollo, and of the future invasions of Attica, is also a kind of epilogue.

[2] See on this subject Commer's De prologorum Euripideorum causa et ratione.

[3] The prologues may be divided, as regards the persons by whom they are spoken, into three kinds: (1) those delivered by a god or spirit, viz. by Hermes (Ion), Poseidon (Troades), Apollo (Alcestis), Aphrodite (Hippolytus), Dionysus (Bacchae), Silenus (Cyclops), Polydorus (Hecuba)—(2) by one of the leading characters, viz. by Helen (Helena), Andromache (Andromache), Iolaus (Heracleidae), Amphitryon (Herc. Fur.), Jocasta (Phoenissae), Iphigeneia (Iph. Taur.), Electra (Orestes)—(3) by a subordinate character, viz. by a nurse (Medea), a husbandman (Electra), Aethra (Supplices).

[4] This prologue is one of the best in Euripides, and the transition to the dialogue which follows is admirably managed. The Hercules Furens, on

No traces of a prologue of this kind are to be found in Aeschylus or Sophocles. The opening speech of the priestess in the Eumenides is partly a prayer, partly a soliloquy; while the complaints of Deianeira at the beginning of the Trachiniae are addressed, not to the spectators, but to the nurse. Euripides was the first, as far as we know, to commence his plays with a speech which had no real dramatic motive apart from the convenience of the audience[1]. He appears to have employed the device almost universally, the only known exceptions being the Rhesus, the Andromeda, and the Iphigeneia in Aulide[2]. But the Rhesus, even if genuine, belongs to the poet's youthful period, before he had settled down into his regular manner; and the Iphigeneia, having been left unfinished at his death, was prepared for the stage by a later hand, which may account for its exceptional form[3].

The prologues of Euripides have been assailed with much severity both in ancient and modern times. The author of the Life observes that they are 'wearisome,' and their stiffness and formality are ingeniously ridiculed by Aristophanes[4]. Nor can

the other hand, supplies an example of the reverse kind, and illustrates the occasional inconvenience of the Euripidean system. The play opens with a pathetic situation, Amphitryon, Megara, and the children crouching in supplication round the altar. But the dramatic effect must have been much impaired, when Amphitryon, rising to his feet, proceeded to deliver a formal address to the spectators.

[1] Nothing is known about the prologues of Thespis and his contemporaries, and it is impossible to say whether they were as formal as those of Euripides, or more dramatic in character, and more like soliloquies. Bergk (Griech. Lit. 3. p. 593) takes the former view, and supposes that the innovation of Euripides was in reality a recurrence to the older type of tragedy. But in the Vita (p. 12 Dindorf) the formal prologue is expressly described as the invention of Euripides (πολλὰ γὰρ εἰς τὴν τέχνην ἐξεῦρεν, ἃ οὐδεισταιοῦν γε τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ. τό τε γὰρ ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ δράματος τὴν ὑπόθεσιν διατυποῦν, καὶ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ὥσπερ χειραγωγεῖν εἰς τὸ ἔμπροσθεν Εὐριπίδου τέχνημα).

[2] The Andromeda began with a soliloquy in anapaests by the heroine, as she stood chained to the rock. Cp. frag. 114 ὦ νὺξ ἱερά, | ὡς μακρὸν ἵππευμα διώκεις | ἀστεροειδέα νῶτα διφρεύουσ' | αἰθέρος ἱερᾶς | τοῦ σεμνοτάτου δι' Ὀλύμπου. These lines are described by Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 1065 as τοῦ προλόγου τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας εἰσβολή. Cp. also frag. 115 τί ποτ' Ἀνδρομέδα περίαλλα κακῶν | μέρος ἐξέλαχον, θανάτου τλήμων | μέλλουσα τυχεῖν, where the Scholiast remarks καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ προλόγου.

[3] See the notices of these plays in § 9.

[4] Vita Eur. p. 11 ἐν τοῖς προλόγοις ὀχληρός. Aristoph. Ran. 1198–1247.

it be denied that they suffer by comparison with the opening scenes of Sophocles—those skilful little dialogues in which the necessary facts are disclosed, the characters introduced, and the leading motive suggested, with consummate ease and gracefulness. Why Euripides, with such perfect models before his eyes, should have deliberately abandoned the dramatic method, and adopted the less interesting form of narrative, has been a puzzle to all the critics. Various explanations have been offered.

According to the common theory, the prologue was chosen by Euripides, as the speediest way of getting through the dull preliminary details of a tragedy, and arriving at those emotional scenes in which he excelled [1]. But this explanation is scarcely consistent with fact. Some of the prefatory dialogues of Sophocles are as brief in extent as the prologues of Euripides. Moreover it is not the practice of the latter, after the conclusion of the prologue, to launch at once into scenes of exalted passion; he prefers to work his way towards the climax in a more skilful manner. The prologue is usually followed by a dialogue of subordinate interest, after which the excitement gradually rises, and the passion becomes more profound, until at length, by means of many successive stages, the culminating point of supreme emotion is attained. Take the Medea, for example. In this play, after the prefatory narrative of the nurse, there follows the conversation between nurse and attendant, in which many new circumstances, not revealed in the prologue, are first brought to light. Then, as the cries of Medea begin to be faintly heard through the palace doors, the anxiety of the nurse increases, and her dialogue with the chorus is pitched in a more passionate key. Suddenly, the sounds from within grow louder and more frequent; the apprehensive forebodings of chorus and nurse are further intensified. At length, after a long period of suspense, the climax is reached with the appearance of Medea in person. Most of the other plays of Euripides will be found to show the same artistic gradation in the tone of the opening scenes.

Lessing, again, suggested that the object of the prologue was to

[1] See, for example, Müller's Literature of Ancient Greece, p. 363.

allay the curiosity of the spectators, by informing them beforehand about the final issue[1]. Schlegel, on the other hand, considered that its purpose was to explain those vital modifications in the legend which Euripides was fond of introducing[2]. Other critics suppose that it was adopted merely to save time, and as being an easy form of composition[3]. All these explanations, however, seem to be inadequate. There are several plays of Euripides in which, as we have already seen, to excite curiosity is one of the principal objects, and in which the prologue itself is used to put the audience off the right scent. There are others, too, such as the Bacchae and the Phoenissae, which contain no conspicuous departure from legendary tradition. Nor can we suppose that in works written with the artistic care and finish of the Hippolytus and the Medea, the choice of form was dictated by any such consideration as the desire of avoiding trouble.

It seems more likely, therefore, that the adoption of the prologue was due, not to any of the special reasons described above, but to that general desire for clearness of exposition, which was characteristic of ancient tragedy, and of Euripides in particular[4]. The Greeks had no playbill, and the prologue offered a convenient substitute, informing the spectators, with greater directness than was possible in a dialogue, about the scene of the action, the names of the chief characters, and the subject of the play. This being its purpose, it was equally appropriate, whether the denouement was disclosed or revealed, and the legend modified or preserved intact. At the same time, apart from this general consideration, it possessed several minor advantages. The mere fact of its novelty would be a recommendation to a poet like Euripides, who was often compelled to traverse ground already occupied by others, and who was therefore anxious for any kind of variety. Further than this, it enabled him to gratify his passion for legendary detail, by

[1] Dramatic Notes, 48 and 49.

[2] Dramatic Literature, p. 119.

[3] E.g. Bergk, Griech. Lit. 3. p. 594.

[4] This quality is frequently noticed by the ancient critics. Cp. Vita Eur. p. 12 *τό τε σαφήνειαν ἔχειν τὰ λεγόμενα . . . Εὐριπίδου τέχνημα.* Dion Chrysost. or. 14 *τὰ λαμβεῖα σαφῶς καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἔχοντα.* Ibid. *σαφῶς καὶ ἀκριβῶς δηλοῖ τὴν τοῦ δράματος ὑπόθεσιν.*

tracing the myth down from remote antiquity, and explaining all its antiquarian associations. This lucid completeness of exposition, however, was only obtained by a considerable sacrifice of outward beauty. Still the prologues of Euripides, in spite of their obvious defects, are far from deserving all the contempt which has been poured upon them. In an ancient tragedy, with its stately regularity of structure, the transition from a long descriptive narrative to a dialogue of a formal and conventional type could be effected with far less appearance of abruptness than would be the case upon the modern stage. Moreover, in Euripides the transition is often managed with remarkable skill. The story begins far back in the distant past, winding its way briefly and swiftly through old legends and traditions, and increasing in fullness and intensity as it draws nearer and nearer to the time of action, until at length, when we reach the present moment, it suddenly quickens into dialogue, and we are face to face with the reality. This gradual ascent from description to action is not without a certain artistic impressiveness.

§ 5. *The Chorus.*

It was hardly to be expected that, in the midst of the other alterations introduced by Euripides into tragedy, the position of the chorus should remain unaffected. Many of the reasons for its existence had disappeared. It was no longer required for the purpose of unfolding the religious significance of the play, and its dramatic effectiveness had been reduced to the smallest limits by the concentration of interest upon actors and dialogue. More than this, owing to the increased complexity of the plot, it began to be felt as a positive incumbrance. Its continual presence in the orchestra, though easily harmonised with the simple structure of the older tragedy, presented grave difficulties to a dramatist of a more modern type. It was often impossible that the mystery on which the plot depended should be concealed from the knowledge of the chorus; and the various intrigues, stratagems, and misconceptions had to be carried out to their conclusion in the presence of fifteen

witnesses, who were acquainted with the facts, and could easily have prevented the catastrophe. The result was a great loss of verisimilitude, as may be seen in many of the extant plays of Euripides. Thus in the Medea the chorus of women are horrified by the atrocity of Medea's design, call her a 'murderous Fury,' and appeal to heaven to expel her from the palace; yet a single word to Jason would have averted the whole calamity. But they remain unaccountably silent. In the Hippolytus, in the same way, they allow the fatal misunderstanding to run its full course, without a single word of explanation; and in the Iphigeneia in Aulide they watch, without protest, the execution of the stratagem by which Clytaemnestra is betrayed.

The chorus then, in its old shape, had come to be incompatible with the later development of tragedy. Accordingly, in course of time, its status was transformed, it was gradually excluded from all real participation in the plot, and its duties were confined, in the main, to the provision of a musical interlude during the successive scenes. This change was first carried to completion by Agathon[1]; but the beginning of the process may be easily traced in the extant tragedies of Euripides. If we compare his later plays with those of earlier date, there is a manifest tendency to thrust the chorus more and more into the background. Its connexion with the story begins to be less intimate, its interest in the characters less keen and personal, than in former times; and it is evidently on the way towards assuming those insignificant functions, to which it was finally reduced.

A clear demonstration of this point is afforded by a consideration of the contents of the choral odes. In the earlier dramas of Euripides the chorus, as in Sophocles, still play the part of interested and sympathetic witnesses. Their attention is absorbed by the incidents upon the stage; and the odes which they interpose between the intervals of the action consist, either of fervent expressions of sympathy and concern, or of reflexions

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 18 *τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς τὰ ᾀδόμενα οὐδὲν μᾶλλον τοῦ μύθου ἢ ἄλλης τραγῳδίας ἐστίν· διὸ ἐμβόλιμα ᾄδουσιν, πρώτου ἄρξαντος Ἀγάθωνος τοῦ τοιούτου.*

upon the events which have just occurred[1]. The tone of their meditations, no doubt, is less searching and profound than in Sophocles. They no longer endeavour to trace, in the issue of the tragedy, the workings of destiny and universal law. Their minds are more attracted by those current questions of social and political science in which Euripides was interested, such as the futility of war, the position of women, the value of noble birth, and the pleasures and pains of marriage and of family life[2]. But although reflexions of this kind hardly touch the deeper significance of the tragedy, yet they arise spontaneously out of the course of the incidents, and have a direct reference to the action.

But in the majority of the later tragedies a great change is observable. The chorus no longer appear to be deeply affected by the varying fortunes of the drama. Their attitude is less sympathetic; and instead of expressions of emotion or pensive meditations, they occupy the pauses of the play with long and ornate descriptions of some legendary event, taken from the family history of the leading characters[3]. Thus the tragic meeting of the brothers in the Phoenissae is followed by an account of the adventures of Cadmus, and his slaughter of the dragon; and the self-sacrifice of Menoeceus suggests nothing more appropriate, by way of comment, than the story of Oedipus and the Sphinx[4]. Odes of this kind have no real bearing upon the action, and for all practical purposes may be regarded as interludes.

Sometimes, however, the connexion is even more remote, the mythical story which the chorus celebrate being one with which the heroes of the tragedy have no concern. Yet even here it is curious to observe, in the practice of Euripides,

[1] In the plays which are known to be of early date—the Alcestis, Medea, Heracleidae, and Hippolytus—the odes are all of this character. The Hecuba is a partial exception: but the choruses in this play, though somewhat mythical, are far less irrelevant than in many of the later compositions.

[2] E.g. Med. 409–444, 1081–1115. Ion 468–491. Androm. 766–801. Hel. 1151–1162.

[3] Cp. Hel. 1301–1368. Androm. 274–308, 1010–1047. Iph. Taur. 1234–1283. Iph. Aul. 751–800, 1036–1097. El. 699–746.

[4] Phoen. 638–689, 1019–1066.

a lingering feeling of regard for the old traditions of the drama. He never abandons all pretence of relationship between the ode and the play, but even when the reference is least obvious, endeavours to supply a link of some kind or another. In the Electra, for example, nothing could appear less pertinent to the subject of Clytaemnestra's death than the description of the Shield of Achilles by which it is preceded; but Euripides connects the two by observing, at the end of the ode, that Clytaemnestra must die, since she murdered the chief who counted among his followers men as brave as Achilles[1].

A further symptom of the decline of the chorus, and of its gradual conversion into a musical interlude, is to be found in the style and language of the choral odes. The earlier lyrics of Euripides are masterpieces of graceful beauty and imaginative power; but in those which belong to his later period the execution, on the whole, is far less perfect. In spite of numerous brilliant exceptions, there is a general tendency, in these later compositions, to subordinate sense to sound, and to think more of the music than of the language. The meaning is occasionally almost lost in a labyrinth of words, which recalls the inanities of the Italian opera. The sentences are spun out to enormous length with strings of appositional clauses loosely hung together; and the mind is floated along from phrase to phrase, and picture to picture, through a long series of bewildering images, with only a very dim conception of the general purpose of the whole[2]. In such cases it is clear that musical effect was the prime object; and many of these odes appear to have been composed, more as a vehicle for elaborate melodies, than as an integral and significant portion of the play[3].

If we turn our attention from the choral odes, which were sung

[1] El. 432–486.

[2] This appositional style is parodied by Aristophanes in Ran. 1331–1339 *ὦ Νυκτὸς κελαινοφαὴς | ὄρφνα, τίνα μοι | δύστανον ὄνειρον | πέμπεις ἐξ ἀφανοῦς, | Ἅιδα πρόπολον, | ψυχὰν ἄψυχον ἔχοντα, | μελαίνας Νυκτὸς παῖδα, | φρικώδη δεινὰν ὄψιν, | μελανονεκνείμονα, | φόνια φόνια δερκόμενον, | μεγάλους ὄνυχας ἔχοντα.*

[3] Cp. Aristotle's well-known criticism in Poet. c. 18 (quoted on p. 155). Cp. also Schol. Aristoph. Acharn. 442 *οὗτοι γὰρ* (i.e. Euripides) *εἰσάγει τοὺς χοροὺς οὐ τὰ ἀκόλουθα φθεγγομένους τῇ ὑποθέσει, ἀλλ' ἱστορίας τινὰς ἀπαγγέλλοντας, ὡς ἐν ταῖς Φοινίσσαις.*

during the intervals of the action, to the part which was played by the chorus in the dialogue itself, we shall find the same tendency at work. The intervention of the chorus in the spoken portion of the dialogue is restricted, in most cases, to the utterance of occasional maxims, and of responses to the long addresses of the leading characters. Those lengthy conversations between actor and chorus, which had played such a prominent part in the dramas of Aeschylus, are seldom employed by Euripides; and when they do occur, their duration is much diminished, and their dramatic significance reduced[1]. The same is the case with the lyrical duets between stage and orchestra, which are much less frequent in Euripides than in his two predecessors, their place being taken by duets and solos confined exclusively to the actors. As this point will be considered more fully in the following chapter, it will be sufficient in the present place to merely call attention to the fact, as an illustration of the general practice of Euripides[2].

The transformation effected in the character of the chorus during the course of the fifth century is vividly exemplified in the Phoenissae of Euripides, as compared with the Septem of Aeschylus. Both plays deal with the same subject—the invasion of Thebes, and the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices; but the treatment is entirely different. In Aeschylus the action upon the stage, with the exception of one or two scenes towards the close, is devoid of tragic intensity, and consists mainly of monologues and narratives. The dramatic excitement of the play is centred in the chorus of Theban maidens, whose wild and piteous outcries reflect the agitation and despair of the inhabitants of the city. In Euripides the position of affairs is exactly reversed, all the passion and emotion being confined to the stage, and to the spectacle of the mother's agony, and the venomous hatred of the two brothers. The chorus consist, not of Thebans, as in Aeschylus, but of

[1] In the nineteen dramas of Euripides there are only about twenty-six instances of such conversations; and, with the exception of those in the Cyclops, they are mostly short and unimportant. In Sophocles they occur more frequently (about fifteen in the seven plays), but not to anything like the same extent as in Aeschylus.

[2] See p. 362.

Tyrian maidens, sent to Delphi as an offering, and detained in Thebes by mere accident. They have no personal concern in the war, no preference for either side, and no fears for their own safety. Their position is one of complete impartiality, and their indifference finds expression in the unruffled tranquillity and mythical allusiveness of the choral odes. At the conclusion of the tragedy they drop all pretence of dramatic impersonation, and as they leave the orchestra, speak as mere competitors in the tragic contest, expressing a hope that they will obtain the crown of victory[1].

Speaking generally, then, the history of the chorus in Euripides is a history of gradual decline. But Euripides, in this as well as in many other points, is not always consistent in carrying out his innovating tendencies. At times, even in his later works, he recurs with sudden affection to the ancient practice, and restores the chorus to much of its original grandeur and significance. Thus in the Supplices the mothers of the seven chiefs are the persons most deeply concerned in the issue of the action; and their utterances, in consequence, are marked by unusual intensity of personal feeling. But the most conspicuous example of all is the Bacchae. In this play, one of the very latest of extant Greek tragedies, the chorus appears to make its dying effort, and flashes forth with renewed splendour, just before its final degradation. The wild and passionate enthusiasm of the Bacchantes, their breathless suspense during the progress of an action on which their very life depends, and their jubilant exultation over the victory, not only give to the play its distinctive tone, but also excite a dramatic interest hardly inferior to the interest of the Eumenides.

§ 6. *The Language.*

Among the causes which contributed to the popularity of Euripides in ancient times, not the least important was the

[1] Phoen. 1759-1761 *ὦ μέγα σεμνὴ Νίκη τὸν ἐμὸν | βίοτον κατέχοις | καὶ μὴ λήγοις στεφανοῦσα.* These same lyrics are repeated at the end of the Orestes, and the Iphigeneia in Tauris.

beauty of his style, which was universally admired for its graceful facility and rhetorical power[1]. The extent of the enthusiasm which it excited in antiquity is proved by the permanence of its effect upon Greek literature. It speedily became the recognised style of the later tragedy[2], and was imitated with hardly less zeal by the comic dramatists[3]. Even Aristophanes felt its charm, and confessed that, while abhorring the sentiments of the poet, he was willing to copy the elegance of his language[4]. Dionysius, the critic, places Euripides among the most prominent representatives of the 'flowery' kind of writing; praises his diction for its soft and fluent attractiveness, and the harmonious balance of its clauses; and compares it to a gently flowing stream, or to a picture in which lights and shades are imperceptibly commingled[5]. This description, as far as it goes, is doubtless a true one; the style of Euripides is distinguished by nothing so much as by its easy and melodious smoothness. At the same time it possesses many other striking merits which are not always to be found in the 'flowery' method of composition. It is lucid, without being commonplace. Though frequently diffuse, it is capable at times of intense force and concentration. In the expression of tempestuous emotion, and of deep and tender pathos, it is hardly to be excelled. Above all, when at its best, it displays in full perfection that supreme and unapproachable beauty of form, of which the Greeks alone possessed the secret.

[1] See Fraccaroli, De Euripidis scribendi artificio.

[2] Aristot. Rhet. 3. 2 *οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ τὰς τραγῳδίας ποιοῦντες ἔτι χρῶνται τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, ἀλλὰ . . . τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀφείκασιν ὅσα παρὰ τὴν διάλεκτόν ἐστιν, οἷς οἱ πρότερον ἐκόσμουν.* Ibid. c. 1 *κλέπτεται δ' εὖ, ἐάν τις ἐκ τῆς εἰωθυίας διαλέκτου ἐκλέγων συντιθῇ· ὅπερ Εὐριπίδης ποιεῖ καὶ ὑπέδειξε πρῶτος.* In addition to this testimony of Aristotle, the imitation of Euripides is an obvious feature in the fragments of the later tragic poets.

[3] Quint. Inst. Orat. 10. 1. 69 'et admiratus maxime est, ut saepe testatur, et eum secutus quamquam in opere diverso Menander.' On the admiration of Philemon and Diphilus for Euripides, see Vita Eur. p. 7 (Dindf.), Athen. p. 422.

[4] Schol. Plat. p. 330 (Bekker) *Ἀριστοφάνης . . . ἐκωμῳδεῖτο ἐπὶ τῷ σκώπτειν μὲν Εὐριπίδην, μιμεῖσθαι δ' αὐτόν. Κρατῖνος· Τίς δὲ σύ; κομψός τις ἔροιτο θεατής· | ὑπολεπτόλογος, γνωμιδιώκτης, εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων. καὶ αὐτὸς δ' ἐξομολογεῖται Σκηνὰς Καταλαμβανούσαις· χρῶμαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ στόματος τῷ στρογγύλῳ, | τοὺς νοῦς δ' ἀγοραίους ἧττον ἢ 'κεῖνος ποιῶ.*

[5] Dion. Hal., Comp. Verb. c. 23. The name he gives to this style is the *ἀνθηρὰ σύνθεσις.*

Regarded as a whole the language of Euripides appears uniform and consistent in its texture. But when examined more in detail, it will be found to exhibit considerable diversities, according to the varying nature of the subject. The lyrical odes stand by themselves. But even in the dialogue Euripides may be said to have three varieties of style. The first of these is that which he employs in the narrative portions of tragedy, and in those parts where the excitement and pathos are less pronounced. On these occasions he follows Aeschylus rather than Sophocles in the use of grand and pompous phraseology[1]. He displays, like Aeschylus, a partiality for words of sonorous form, which give weight and dignity to the verse[2]. He delights, also, in long picturesque epithets and grandiloquent phrases. Cars are 'earth-treading,' shields are 'iron-backed,' a day is a 'shining transit of the sun,' sheep are 'nurslings of Parnassian herbage[3].' This occasional strain of magniloquence has not escaped the notice of Aristophanes, by whom it is frequently ridiculed[4]. Though

[1] Most of the narratives in Euripides are of this kind. We may mention, as examples, Phoen. 1090–1199, Ion 1122–1228, Androm. 1085–1165.

[2] Especially (1) substantives in *-μα*, such as *παρθένευμα, οἰκούρημα, συγκοίμημα, χρύσωμα, ὀρφάνευμα, ὑπαγκάλισμα, μίσημα, νύμφευμα κ.τ.λ.* (2) Compound adjectives in *-γονος, -νωτος, -πηχυς* and the like, e.g. *πυρσόνωτος, χαλκόνωτος, λευκόπηχυς, καλλίπηχυς κ.τ.λ.*

Many of these formations were coined by Euripides himself. But in the invention of new words he was not nearly so prolific as Aeschylus. The words which appear in his writings for the first time are only about 700, though collected from nineteen plays and copious fragments; while the seven plays and the scanty fragments of Aeschylus supply over 1100 (Schirlitz, De sermonis tragici per Euripidem incrementis, Halle, 1865).

[3] Med. 1123 *ὄχον πεδοστιβῆ.* Phoen. 1130 *σιδηρονώτοις ἀσπίδος τύποις.* Androm. 1086 *φαεννὰς ἡλίου διεξόδους.* Ibid. 1100 *μῆλα, φυλλάδος Παρνησίας παιδεύματα.* Cp. also Phoen. 488 *μήτε προσφέρειν | πύργοισι πηκτῶν κλιμάκων προσαμβάσεις.* Androm. 992 *μετελθεῖν πωλικοῖς διώγμασιν.* Ion 1266–1268 *λάζυσθ', ἵν' αὐτῆς τοὺς ἀκηράτους πλόκους | κόμης καταξήνωσι Παρνασοῦ πλάκες, | ὅθεν πετραῖον ἅλμα δισκευθήσεται.* Iph. Taur. 1372 *δεινοῖς δὲ σημάντροισιν ἐσφραγισμένοι* (bearing the marks of blows). Ibid. 634 *καὶ τῆς ὀρείας ἀνθεμόρρυτον γάνος | ξουθῆς μελίσσης.* Androm. 166 *ἐκ χρυσηλάτων | τευχέων χερὶ σπείρουσαν Ἀχελῴου δρόσον.* Herc. Fur. 1269–1273 *ἐπεὶ δὲ σαρκὸς περιβόλαι' ἐκτησάμην | ἡβῶντα, μόχθους οὐς ἔτλην τί δεῖ λέγειν; | ποίους ποτ' ἢ λέοντας ἢ τρισωμάτους | Τυφῶνας ἢ Γίγαντας ἢ τετρασκελῆ | κενταυροπληθῆ πόλεμον οὐκ ἐξήνυσα;*

[4] E. g. throughout the scene in the Acharnians, 404–479. Cp. 426 *πεπλώματα*, 432 *Τηλέφου ῥακώματα*, 449 *ἄπελθε λαῖνων σταθμῶν*, 479 *κλεῖε πηκτὰ δωμάτων.*

copied from Aeschylus, it can hardly be said to equal the original in vividness and imaginative power. At times, indeed, it seems more like a mannerism of speech, consciously adopted for the sake of effect, than like the spontaneous outcome of a gorgeous fancy.

But Euripides has also another style, which was considered by the ancients to be peculiarly characteristic of his poetry, and to which Aristophanes is obviously alluding, when he makes him boast of having 'reduced the bulk and pruned down the pomposity' of tragic diction[1]. It may be called the 'plain' style, and its distinguishing features are simplicity and absence of ornament. The language it employs is that of ordinary life; yet owing to some subtle and indefinable charm in the arrangement of the words, it strikes the finest chords of emotion[2]. In scenes of deep feeling, in tender dialogues, and pathetic speeches and descriptions, Euripides glides imperceptibly into this natural way of writing, which he uses with overwhelming effect. To reproduce such passages in a translation would be useless; their delicate beauty vanishes with the slightest alteration of the language. But we may mention Medea's soliloquy before the murder of her children, Hercules' lament over his wife and sons, and the description of the dying Alcestis, as beautiful examples of this simple kind of pathos[3]. The style which we have been describing is warmly commended by Aristotle, who regards Euripides as its inventor[4]. Though apparently easy, yet to wield it with effect is granted only to the highest genius. Hence one of the poets of the Anthology warns

[1] Ran. 939–941 ἀλλ' ὡς παρέλαβον τὴν τέχνην παρὰ σοῦ τὸ πρῶτον εὐθὺς | οἰδοῦσαν ὑπὸ κομπασμάτων καὶ ῥημάτων ἐπαχθῶν, | ἰσχνανα μὲν πράτιστον αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ βάρος ἀφεῖλον.

[2] Longinus de sublim. c. 40 πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν . . . κοινοῖς καὶ δημώδεσι τοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ οὐδὲν ἐπαγομένοις περιττὸν ὡς τὰ πολλὰ συγχρώμενοι, διὰ μόνου τοῦ συνθεῖναι καὶ ἁρμόσαι ταῦτα ὅμως ὄγκον καὶ διάστημα καὶ τὸ μὴ ταπεινοὶ δοκεῖν εἶναι περιεβάλοντο, καθάπερ Ἀριστοφάνης ἔν τισιν, ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις Εὐριπίδης . . . μετά γέ τοι τὴν τεκνοκτονίαν Ἡρακλῆς φησι, Γέμω κακῶν δὴ κοὐκέτ' ἔσθ' ὅποι τεθῇ. σφόδρα δημῶδες τὸ λεγόμενον, ἀλλὰ γέγονεν ὑψηλὸν τῇ πλάσει.

[3] Med. 1019 foll., Herc. Fur. 1351 foll., Alc. 152 foll.

[4] Aristot. Rhet. 3. 2 διὸ δεῖ λανθάνειν ποιοῦντας, καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν λέγειν πεπλασμένως ἀλλὰ πεφυκότως· τοῦτο γὰρ πιθανόν . . . κλέπτεται δ' εὖ, ἐάν τις ἐκ τῆς εἰωθυίας διαλέκτου ἐκλέγων συντιθῇ· ὅπερ Εὐριπίδης ποιεῖ καὶ ὑπέδειξε πρῶτος.

his readers against the folly of imitating Euripides, 'whose path,' he says, 'though smooth and inviting to the eye, proves rougher, to those who follow it, than sharp-pointed caltrops[1].'

The third manner, the forensic, prevails almost exclusively in those debates and oratorical contentions which Euripides seldom fails to introduce[2]. In diction it is sometimes pompous and ornamental, sometimes simple and straightforward; but it is to be discriminated from each of the other styles by its strong and pronounced rhetorical colouring. The conscious art of the advocate is everywhere apparent. Sometimes this art degenerates into artifice and over-subtlety, and produces those 'twists and contrivances' of which the comic poets complained[3]. As a rule, however, the speeches composed in this fashion are striking specimens of oratorical power, and their force and argumentative skill were the admiration of the ancient writers on rhetoric[4].

In spite of the varied excellencies of Euripides, it must be admitted that in carefulness of execution and finish of language he compares unfavourably with Sophocles. Signs of hasty and negligent composition are far from infrequent in the work of his later period. Apart from occasional examples of loose and ill-constructed sentences[5], he is apt at times to lapse into a mechanical style of tragic diction, which takes the place of poetic inspiration. A conventional aspect is given to the verse by the constant employment of certain stock phrases and forms of expression. The word 'dew,' for example, is repeatedly introduced for every kind of liquid, and the word 'couch' is

[1] Anthol. Pal. 7. 50 *τὴν Εὐριπίδεω μήτ' ἔρχεο μήτ' ἐπιβάλλου | δύσβατον ἀνθρώποις οἶμον, ἀοιδοθέτα. | λείη μὲν γὰρ ἰδεῖν καὶ ἐπίρροθος· ἣν δέ τις αὐτὴν | εἰσβαίνῃ, χαλεποῦ τρηχυτέρη σκόλοπος.*

[2] Cp. Aristoph. Pax 534 *ποιητὴς ῥημάτων δικανικῶν.*

[3] Aristoph. Ran. 775 *ἀντιλογιῶν καὶ λογισμῶν καὶ στροφῶν.* Cp. 826–828, 892–894, 956–958, &c.

[4] E.g. Dion Chrysost. Or. 18. Quint. Inst. Orat. 10. 1. 68.

[5] Cp. the long string of relative clauses in Herc. Fur. 1–7 *τίς τὸν Διὸς σύλλεκτρον οὐκ οἶδεν βροτῶν, | Ἀργεῖον Ἀμφιτρύων', ὃν Ἀλκαῖός ποτε | ἐτιχθ' ὁ Περσέως, πατέρα τόνδ' Ἡρακλέους; | ὃς τάσδε Θήβας ἔσχεν, ἔνθ' ὁ γηγενὴς | σπαρτῶν στάχυς ἔβλαστεν, ὧν γένους Ἄρης | ἕσωσ' ἀριθμὸν ὀλίγον, οἳ Κάδμου πόλιν | τεκνοῦσι παίδων παισίν.* Cp. also the involved arrangement of the words in Hel. 718 *σπεύδων δ', ὅτ' ἔσπευδ', οὐδὲν εἶχε· νῦν δ' ἔχει | αὐτόματα πράξας τἀγάθ' εὐτυχέστατα.*

used no less than twenty-nine times in one play as a synonym for wedlock[1]. Circumlocutions, such as 'circle of the market,' and 'circle of the sun,' are hardly less common[2]. The practice of repeating the same word is often pushed to extremes, as in his 'holy, holy night ... hasten, hasten on wings ... by sorrow, by calamity we are ruined, ruined[3].' Alliteration and verbal antithesis are further tricks of style in which he indulges to excess[4]. The presence of these defects in certain plays, and portions of plays, may be recognised and conceded, without interfering with our admiration for his greatest productions, or affecting our general estimate of the beauty of his diction.

§ 7. *Moral and Religious Ideas.*

When Euripides wrote for the stage, the time had passed away in which it was possible for an Athenian of education to place any credence in those antique legends which formed

[1] E.g. Hipp. 127 *ποταμίᾳ δρόσῳ*. Iph. Taur. 255 *ἑναλίᾳ δρόσῳ*, 1192 *θαλασσίᾳ δρόσῳ*. Iph. Aul. 182 *κρηναίαις δρόσοις*. Androm. 167 *Ἀχελῴου δρόσον*. The words *λέχος* and *λέκτρον* occur twenty-nine times in the Helena, in various senses connected with marriage, e.g. 7 *λέκτρ' ἀφῆκεν Αἰακοῦ*, 30 *ἐμὸν σχήσων λέχος*, 32 *ἐξηνέμωσε τἄμ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ λέχη*, 48 *ὡς σώσαιμι Μενέλεω λέχος*, 59 *ἵνα μὴ λέκτρ' ὑποστρώσω τινί κ.τ.λ.*

Another favourite word in Euripides is *πούς*, which occurs in various conventional phrases (e.g. *νόστιμον δ' ἔλθοις πόδα* Alc. 1153, *ποῖ μ' ὑπεξάγεις πόδα* Hec. 812, *τί χρῆμ' ἐπέμψω τὸν ἐμὸν ἐκ δόμων πόδα* Hec. 977, *παρθένου δέχου πόδα* Orest. 1217, *ὁμαρτεῖτ' ἀθλίῳ μητρὸς ποδί* Herc. Fur. 336, *σὺν πατρὸς μολὼν ποδί* Hipp. 661.

The phrases *φῶς ὁρᾶν, φάος βλέπειν κ.τ.λ.*, in the sense 'to live,' are extremely common in Euripides, and are found nine times in the Hippolytus alone.

[2] *Ἀγορᾶς κύκλος* Orest. 919, *κύκλον ἡλίου* Hec. 412. Especially frequent is his use of the word *πτυχή* and its compounds, e.g. *Κιθαιρῶνος πτύχας* Bacch. 62, *Πηλίου πτύχας* Androm. 1277, *ἡλίου ἀναπταχαί* Hipp. 601, *σώματος ἀμφιπτυχάς* Ion. 519, *δέλτου πολύθοροι διαπτυχαί* Iph. Taur. 726, *Ἀχαιῶν ναύλοχοι περιπτυχαί* Hec. 1015, *ἡλίου περιπτυχαί* Ion 1516, &c.

[3] Orest. 174–180 *πότνια πότνια νὺξ ... μόλε μόλε κατάπτερος ... ὑπὸ γὰρ ἀλγέων ὑπό τε συμφορᾶς διοιχόμεθ' οἰχόμεθα*. This mannerism becomes remarkably common in the later plays. Fraccaroli (p. 53) gives eighteen instances out of the Bacchae, and thirty-nine out of the Orestes. Cp. the parody in Aristoph. Thesm. 913 *λαβέ με, λαβέ με, πόσι· | περίβαλε δὲ χέρας. | φέρε, σὲ κύσω. ἄπαγέ μ' ἄπαγ' ἄπαγ' ἄπαγέ με.*

[4] Iph. Taur. 220 *ἄγαμος, ἄτεκνος, ἄπολις, ἄφιλος*. Orest. 195 *ἔκανες, ἔθανες*. 1302 *καίνετε, ὄλλυτε, δίπτυχα δίστομα φάσγανα πέμπετε*. Phoen. 357 *φρονῶν εὖ κοὐ φρονῶν*. Iph. Taur. 202 *δυσδαίμων δαίμων*, 889 *ὁδοὺς ἀνόδους*. See Fraccaroli (l. c.) for numerous further examples.

the subject of the tragic drama. But they still retained their hold over the minds of the common people, and their performance in the theatre continued to be looked upon as a sort of religious celebration. Under these circumstances the duty of the tragic poet, who regarded his vocation in a serious light, was one of some difficulty. It was possible for him to follow the example of Sophocles, and preserve an outward acquiescence in the traditional beliefs, while modifying their incongruities and heightening their impressiveness. Euripides, however, was not content to pursue such a course[1]. He was unable to conceal his contempt for the monstrosity of some of the ancient myths on which the national religion was founded, and in several passages of his tragedies he subjects them to the severest criticism[2]. He allows his characters, in these places,

[1] On the religious views of Euripides see Lübker, Beiträge zur Theologie und Ethik des Euripides. Maignen, Morale d'Euripide. Decharme, Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre, chaps. 2 and 3.

[2] Dr. Verrall, in the striking book which he has just published (Euripides the Rationalist, Cambridge, 1895), adopts an opinion concerning the religious sentiments of Euripides which in many respects is entirely novel. He considers that Euripides was a sceptic of the aggressive type, whose principal object in writing tragedy was to attack the state religion, but who, perceiving it would be dangerous to pose as an open enemy, endeavoured to accomplish his ends by covert ridicule. The plan which he adopted was as follows. In dramatising a legend for the stage he made an outward show of following the ordinary tradition; but he contrived, at the same time, by means of various sly hints and delicate innuendos, to suggest a rationalistic explanation of the miraculous details, which was calculated to bring the whole fable into contempt. His plays, therefore, being constructed in this fashion, contain in reality two separate plots—the ostensible and superficial plot, which was intended to satisfy the orthodox, and the rationalised modification which lay half concealed beneath it, and which the intelligent sceptic would easily detect. It was in this subtle and insidious method of attack that he found congenial employment for that 'unsurpassed and, it may be, unsurpassable wit,' which, according to Dr. Verrall, was his greatest faculty.

Dr. Verrall proceeds to illustrate this theory by an analysis of three plays, the Alcestis, Ion, and Iphigeneia in Tauris. The story of the Alcestis, as told by implication, assumes the following form. Alcestis never really dies at all, but is reduced to a state of coma by fear of the oracle; and her husband, who thinks her dead, and is ashamed of his conduct, buries her in haste to avoid publicity. Then Hercules, who has been entertained at the palace, and become 'very drunk,' on hearing the news hastens off to the tomb, finds Alcestis recovered from her trance, and restores her to Admetus. The two other plays are treated in the same fashion, and an ordinary story of real life is extracted out of their legendary details.

Such is a brief statement of the hypothesis which Dr. Verrall has elaborated

to express without reserve their indignation at the lust and treachery of the legendary deities. 'Is it just,' exclaims Ion, 'that the gods who lay down laws for mankind should themselves act lawlessly? . . . If Apollo, and Poseidon, and Zeus, the lord of heaven, were to pay penalty for the wives they have ravished, soon would their temples be emptied of all treasure[1].' No less bitter is the complaint of Amphitryon against Zeus, for his seduction of Alcmene, and his desertion of Hercules. 'Even I,' he says, 'though but a mortal, surpass thee in virtue. I have not betrayed the sons of Hercules. As for thee, thou knewest how to steal in secret to the bed of another's wife, but to save thy friends thou knowest not. A feeble god, or a treacherous, art thou[2].'

Sometimes the opinion is boldly advanced that these stories about the deities are mere inventions, and that mankind have attributed to the divine beings their own vices and passions. 'Never will I believe,' says Hercules, 'that the gods pursue unlawful loves, or that they throw their kindred into bonds, or that one is master of the other. God, if he be a true god, has need of nothing. These are but the pitiful fables of poets[3].' In the same way it is occasionally hinted that prodigies such as the birth of Helen from a swan's egg, and the sun's deviation

at great length, and with much subtlety and penetration. But it is open to various objections which, as it seems to me, are very difficult to overcome. If we accept his view, we should have to believe that the real purpose of Euripides had been ignored and misinterpreted by every critic, ancient as well as modern, for more than two thousand years. This fact in itself is a sufficient cause for hesitation. Moreover, the anomalies and incongruities in the plays of Euripides, on which Dr. Verrall bases his conclusions, are not greater than those which are to be found in most other works of fiction. Indeed, there are very few dramas which, if subjected to an equally searching process of dissection, would come out unscathed. These and other objections are forcibly pointed out by Mr. Mozley in his article in the Classical Review (Nov. 1895, pp. 407–413), to which the reader is referred for further information.

[1] Ion 436–451.

[2] Herc. Fur. 339–347. Cp. frag. 266 (the cruelty of Athene in permitting human sacrifices).

[3] Herc. Fur. 1341–1346. Cp. Iph. Taur. 380–391, where Iphigeneia refuses to believe that the gods delight in human blood, and adds *τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ', αὐτοὺς ὄντας ἀνθρωποκτόνους | ἐς τὸν θεὸν τὸ φαῦλον ἀναφέρειν δοκῶ· | οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν.* Cp. also frag. 292 *εἰ θεοί τι δρῶσιν αἰσχρόν, οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοί.*

from his course in horror at the crime of Atreus, are poetical fancies[1]. Many, also, of the religious customs and superstitions of the time, which were inconsistent with reason or common sense, such as the abuse of the privilege of asylum, and the belief in pollution by contact with murderers, are fearlessly criticised[2].

But it is against oracles and divinations, and the whole tribe of seers and soothsayers, that the attacks of Euripides are more especially directed. For this animosity there was a political motive. Delphi, throughout the Peloponnesian War, had taken the side of Sparta with open partiality[3]. Moreover, during the debates on the Sicilian expedition, oracles and prophecies had been lavishly employed in favour of the enterprise[4]. Hence its disastrous termination excited, among the Athenians, a strong popular feeling against the whole system of divination[5]. At such a time it was possible for a poet to attack the system without fear of opposition or prosecution; and Euripides, in many plays, has given expression to the prevailing sentiment. The Delphic oracle, in particular, is frequently exhibited in an unfavourable light. Apollo, the god of Delphi, is represented in the Ion as a seducer of women, who endeavours to conceal his misdeeds by means of a fraudulent response, and who, after his plot has been discovered, is ashamed to appear in person, and sends Athene to take his place[6]. The vengeance which he exacts from Neoptolemus, when engaged in the very act of restitution, is described as the conduct of a base character who 'remembers old grudges[7].' His incitement of Orestes to the murder of his mother is denounced, in many tragedies, as

[1] Iph. Aul. 794–800. El. 737–745.

[2] Ion 1312–1319. Frags. 266 and 1049.

[3] Thuc. 1. 118.

[4] Plut. Nicias c. 13.

[5] Thuc. 8. 1.

[6] Ion 67–73, 1557–1558. Cp. in the same play Creusa's pathetic monody (881–922) in which she denounces Apollo's cruelty towards herself and her child (*σοὶ μομφάν, ὦ Λατοῦς παῖ,* | *πρὸς τάνδ' αὐγὰν αὐδάσω.* | *ἦλθές μοι χρυσῷ χαίταν* | *μαρμαίρων . . . τίκτω δ' ἁ δύστανός σοι* | *κοῦρον, τὸν φρίκᾳ ματρὸς* | *εἰς εὐνὰν βάλλω τὰν σὰν* | . . . *οἴμοι μοι· καὶ νῦν ἔρρει* | *πτανοῖς ἁρπασθεὶς* | *θοίνα παῖς μοι καὶ σὸς* | *τλάμων, σὺ δὲ κιθάρᾳ* | *κλάζεις παιᾶνας μέλπων.* | . . . *ἰώ, κακὸς εὐνάτωρ* | . . . *μισεῖ σ' ἁ Δᾶλος καὶ δάφνας* | *ἔρνεα φοίνικα.*

[7] Androm. 1161–1165.

wicked and immoral[1]. But the most deliberate and bitter of all the invectives against the art of divination is contained in the Helena, a play which was produced shortly after the Sicilian expedition, when popular indignation was at its height. 'False and worthless,' it is there said, 'are the utterances of soothsayers, nor is wisdom to be found in flames of fire, or in the voices of the feathered tribe. 'Tis folly to hope that birds can bring benefit to mortal men. . . . Let us rather, at our sacrifices, beseech the gods to send us blessings, and let us pay no heed to oracles. . . . Wisdom and prudence are the wisest soothsayers[2].'

In these and similar passages Euripides makes no secret of the sentiments with which he regarded the grosser superstitions of the time. Still, in spite of his occasional frankness, it is easy to exaggerate the extent and purport of his criticisms. To represent him, after the fashion of many scholars, as an uncompromising opponent of the national religion, and as a satirist who was perpetually throwing contempt on the materials with which he had to work, is hardly justified by the facts of the case[3]. The

[1] El. 1245 *Φοῖβός τε Φοῖβος, ἀλλ' ἄναξ γάρ ἐστ' ἐμός, | σιγῶ· σοφὸς δ' ὢν οὐκ ἔχρησέ σοι σοφά* (spoken by the Dioscuri). Cp. ibid. 1302; Orest. 28–30, 160, 417; Iph. Taur. 711–715.

[2] Hel. 744–757. Similar sentiments are to be found in Iph. Taur. 570–575; Iph. Aul. 520, 956–958; Ion 685; frags. 795 and 973.

[3] Schlegel, Dramatic Literature, p. 117. Müller's Literature of Greece, p. 358.

Dr. Verrall goes much further than the older critics, and considers that this polemical criticism of theology was not merely a frequent feature in the poetry of Euripides, but its main object; that it was for this purpose that he took to dramatic writing, and that aesthetic and poetical beauty was to him a secondary consideration (Euripides the Rationalist, pp. 81, 212). Of course, the question as to the motives which actuated Euripides is one which is hardly capable of being settled by actual demonstration, and must be left more or less to each man's own opinion. But it seems to me that there is more truth in Hermann's view, that the chief anxiety of Euripides in his dramatic work was, not to inculcate this or that doctrine, but to write a good tragedy. No doubt the question of religious belief was one on which he felt deeply, and to which he constantly refers, directly or indirectly, in the course of his plays. But to suppose that he took to the stage for polemical reasons, to use it as a platform for the enunciation of his sceptical views, and that human nature and passion were of less importance in his eyes than theological criticisms, appears to me to be a view for which there is very little justification, and one which is likely to lead to mistaken notions concerning his dramatic character.

The passage in Suidas to which Dr.

passages in which he attacks the credibility of the legends are not so numerous as is often supposed. In fact, the tendency of the majority of his plays is to inculcate respect and reverence for the established forms of belief. The Hippolytus and the Bacchae are well-known examples, which it is sufficient merely to mention, and which were composed with the express purpose of exemplifying the disastrous results of intellectual pride, and contempt for the ordinary convictions of mankind. Other dramas, less commonly read, tend in the same direction. Throughout the Heracleidae the prosperity of Athens is described as the result of her piety and veneration for the gods[1]. Demophon, her ruler, is guided in all his actions by a scrupulous regard for religious observance, whence his confident expectation of victory[2]. Theseus in the Supplices exhibits the same characteristics[3]; and in various other plays this reverence for things divine is emphatically represented as the sole source of happiness[4]. Moreover, even in those tragedies where the gods are most

Verrall appeals is not one in which much confidence can be placed, and seems to have been compiled by some commentator without due regard for chronology. It runs as follows—*γέγονε δὲ τὰ πρῶτα ζωγράφος, εἶτα μαθητὴς Προδίκου μὲν ἐν τοῖς ῥητορικοῖς, Σωκράτους δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἠθικοῖς καὶ φιλοσόφοις. διήκουσε δὲ καὶ Ἀναξαγόρου τοῦ Κλαζομενίου· ἐπὶ τραγῳδίαν δὲ ἐτράπη τὸν Ἀναξαγόραν ἰδὼν ὑποστάντα κινδύνους δι' ἅπερ εἰσῆξε δόγματα.* The earlier statement, which represents Euripides as the pupil of Prodicus in rhetoric, and of Socrates in philosophy, is clearly an anachronism. As for the latter part of the passage, we know that Euripides was born, at the latest, in 480, and that he began to write tragedies in his eighteenth year, which brings us down to about 462. But is there any evidence to show that the position of Anaxagoras had been imperilled by his philosophical speculations at as early a period as this? His trial for impiety took place at a much later date, towards the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, and formed part of the general attack on Pericles (Grote, vol. v. p. 365).

[1] Cp. Heracleid. 901–909 *ἔχεις ὁδόν τιν', ὦ πόλις, δίκαιον· | οὐ χρή ποτε τόδ' ἀφελέσθαι | τιμᾶν θεούς· ὁ δὲ μή σε φάσκων | ἐγγὺς μανιῶν ἐλαύνει | δεικνυμένων ἐλέγχων | τῶνδε.*

[2] Heracleid. 238, 258, 264, 766–769.

[3] Suppl. 594–596 *ἐν δεῖ μόνον μοι, τοὺς θεοὺς ἔχειν, ὅσοι | δίκην σέβουσαι· ταῦτα γὰρ ξυνόνθ' ὁμοῦ | νίκην δίδωσιν· ἀρετὴ δ' οὐδὲν φέρει.* | Cp. 155–157, 229–231.

[4] E.g. frag. 352 *ὡς σὺν θεοῖσι τοὺς σοφοὺς κινεῖν δόρυ | στρατηλάτας χρή.* Frag. 853 *τρεῖς εἰσὶν ἀρεταὶ τὰς χρεών σ' ἀσκεῖν, τέκνον, | θεούς τε τιμᾶν τούς τε φύσαντας γονῆς | νόμους τε κοινοὺς Ἑλλάδος· καὶ ταῦτα δρῶν | κάλλιστον ἕξεις στέφανον εὐκλείας ἀεί.* Herc. Fur. 757–759 *τίς ὁ θεοὺς ἀνομίᾳ χραίνων, θνητὸς ὤν, | ἄφρονα λόγον οὐρανίων μακάρων κατέβαλ', | ὡς ἄρ' οὐ σθένουσιν θεοί.* Cp. also Herc. Fur. 772. Hel. 1024–1027. Frags. 255, 835, 991, 1025, 1076, 1078 (in Nauck's second edition).

severely assailed, their conduct is generally vindicated in the end[1]. Creusa, in the Ion, admits at last the justice of Apollo, and his 'temple-gates and shrines once more seem beautiful to her[2].' The Orestes and the Iphigeneia in Tauris conclude with a similar justification of Apollo's wisdom[3]. In many plays, also, where the legend would seem to invite censure, Euripides is unwilling to take advantage of the opportunity. Thus in the Phoenissae and the Iphigeneia in Aulide not a word is uttered in condemnation of the divine ordinance which demanded a human sacrifice as the price of victory.

On the whole, then, it seems doubtful whether Euripides can justly be described as an enemy of the national religion; nor does he appear to have been so regarded by the majority of his countrymen. No doubt the freedom of his utterances may have occasionally given offence, and one or two traditions have been preserved concerning the indignation with which certain passages in his dramas were received. But the charges brought against him were directed, in almost every case, against the ethical, and not the theological, teaching of his plays, and were easily refuted by Euripides[4]. Apart from the partial and biassed attacks of Aristophanes, there is only one recorded instance in which religious scepticism was made the subject of

[1] Dr. Verrall regards these pious terminations as a mere concession to the orthodox, to quiet their apprehensions, in case they began to feel an uneasy suspicion as to the poet's real intention.

[2] Ion 1595–1622 (cp. Athene's words to Creusa, *ἥνεσ' οὕνεκ' εὐλογεῖς θεὸν μεταβαλοῦσ'· ἀεί ποτε | χρόνια μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν πως, ἐς τέλος δ' οὐκ ἀσθενῆ*. Cp. also the final utterance of the chorus, *ὦ Διὸς Λητοῦς τ' Ἄπολλον, χαῖρ'· ὅτῳ δ' ἐλαύνεται | συμφοραῖς οἶκος, σέβοντα δαίμονας θαρσεῖν χρεών*).

[3] Orest. 1665; Iph. Taur. 1475.

[4] It is said that the people were moved to indignation by an impious speech in the Ixion, and by some lines in praise of wealth in the Danae; and that Euripides defended himself in each case by pointing to the sequel of the play and the eventual fate of the bad characters (Plut. de Aud. Poet. c. 4; Seneca, Epist. 115. 14). Aristotle also relates (Rhet. 3. 15) that in a certain law-suit about taxes Euripides was charged with impiety by his opponent because of the well-known line in the Hippolytus (612 *ἡ γλῶσσ' ὀμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος*); and that his reply consisted of a protest against the unfairness of raising questions of that kind in the law-courts. These and similar charges all depend on the same fallacy—that of attributing to the poet sentiments which he places in the mouths of his characters for dramatic reasons.

complaint[1]. And that the popular outcry against him on this occasion was due rather to temporary causes, than to any permanent feeling of mistrust, at any rate in the case of the mass of the citizens, seems to be proved by the fact of his continued popularity, and by the honours which were bestowed upon him, both before and after his death[2]. Indeed, if his attitude towards the established creed had been of that uniformly hostile character which is often ascribed to him, and if the constant object of his plays had been, in the language of Aristophanes, to persuade the people that 'there are no gods,' it is certain that he would never have been permitted to exhibit continuously at a religious festival like the Dionysia[3]. No doubt the Athenians allowed considerable latitude to their dramatists in the treatment and interpretation of the sacred legends. But their tolerance would hardly have gone so far as to allow the production of plays written for the express purpose of undermining the whole structure. Nor had Euripides any such desire. His views are probably expressed in that passage of the Electra, in which, after the truth of one of the fables has been called in question, it is added that 'such tales of fear are salutary to mortals in upholding the worship of the gods[4].' He was conscious of the value of the established religion, but desired, like Pindar before him, and Plato after him, to purify it of its grosser elements; and it is not so much against the existence of the gods, as

[1] Plut. Amator. c. 13 *ἀκούεις δήπου τὸν Εὐριπίδην ὡς ἐθορυβήθη ποιησάμενος ἀρχὴν τῆς Μελανίππης ἐκείνης 'Ζεὺς ὅστις ὁ Ζεύς, οὐ γὰρ οἶδα πλὴν λόγῳ,' μεταλαβὼν δὲ χορὸν ἄλλον ἤλλαξε τὸν στίχον ὡς νῦν γέγραπται, 'Ζεύς, ὡς λέλεκται τῆς ἀληθείας ὕπο.'*

[2] See p. 217. The tradition that he was made priest of Apollo, if true, is especially significant in this connexion.

[3] Aristoph. Thesm. 451 *τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀναπέπεικεν οὐκ εἶναι θεούς.* Apparently there is a reference to the lines in the Bellerophon (frag. 286 *φησίν τις εἶναι δῆτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ θεούς; | οὐκ εἰσίν, οὐκ εἰσ', εἴ τις ἀνθρώπων θέλει | μὴ τῷ παλαιῷ μῶρος ὢν χρῆσθαι λόγῳ.* It is evident, however, that this passage did not express the general purport of the play, but was inserted for dramatic reasons. Later on Bellerophon used very different language, when preparing for death (frag. 311 *ἦσθ' εἰς θεοὺς μὲν εὐσεβής, ὅτ' ἦσθ', ἀεὶ κ.τ.λ.*) The moral of the drama seems to have been that the prosperity of the wicked is unstable (frag. 303).

[4] El. 737–745 *λέγεται, τὰν δὲ πίστιν | σμικρὰν παρ' ἔμοιγ' ἔχει, | στρέψαι . . . φοβεροὶ δὲ βροτοῖσι μῦθοι | κέρδος πρὸς θεῶν θεραπείας. | ὧν οὐ μνασθεῖσα πόσιν κτείνεις, κ.τ.λ.*

against the cruelty and immorality which were popularly ascribed to them, that his attacks are mainly directed. Whether his policy was a wise one, and whether this satirical analysis of the more flagrant absurdities of the mythology would not tend rather to encourage scepticism than to purify belief, is another question which it is unnecessary to discuss.

Beneath the mythical framework in which his tragedies are enclosed, Euripides allows us not infrequent glimpses into his own personal feelings and speculations concerning the nature of the universe and of human destiny. His mind was essentially of a religious and meditative cast. His wistful yearning after truth is beautifully expressed in one of his choruses, in which he beseeches Zeus, 'the ruler of all things,' to 'send light to the souls of men, to those who would fain be forewarned whence sorrow springs, and where evil has its root, that they may know what deity to implore, and so obtain rest from their troubles[1].' But his convictions on these great subjects are less fixed and abiding than those of Sophocles, and less intimately connected with the purpose of his tragedies. The dominant tone is one of doubt and uncertainty[2]. He follows first one guide, then another. His receptive mind welcomes with delight such doctrines as by their beauty appeal most powerfully to the imagination. But he adheres to no single system, and his speculations are those of a poet rather than of a scientific thinker. Yet some account of his changeful opinions, though hardly necessary to the due appreciation of his tragedies, will be of interest as a picture, not only of his own mind, but of the spirit and tendency of the age in which he lived.

As to the existence of some great primal cause, which men call God, he appears to feel no doubt. 'Who,' he asks, 'on beholding all these works can fail to perceive the presence of

[1] Frag. 912.

[2] Cp. Hel. 1137–1139 *ὅ τι θεός, ἢ μὴ θεός, ἢ τὸ μέσον, | τίς φύσιν ἐρευνήσας βροτῶν | μακρότατον πέρας ηὗρεν*; Orest. 418 *δουλεύομεν θεοῖς, ὅ τι ποτ' εἰσὶν οἱ θεοί.* Frag. 391 *οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν χωρὶς ἀνθρώποις θεῶν· | σπουδάζομεν δὲ πόλλ' ὑπ' ἐλπίδων, μάτην | πόνους ἔχοντες, οὐδὲν εἰδότες σαφές.* Cp. also frags. 480, 795.

the Almighty, or to thrust far away the crooked wiles of those philosophers whose baneful tongue discourses at random about invisible things[1]?' But as to the nature and attributes of this first cause all is darkness. Sometimes, with Anaxagoras, he believes it to be Mind, 'the self-begotten,' that 'embraces universal nature,' and inhabits the soul of each individual man[2]. Sometimes it is Air, 'stretching boundlessly on high, and enfolding the earth in its pliant arms[3].' Sometimes, again, in default of more certain knowledge, he calls it Necessity[4].

But while believing in the existence of some supreme being, he is doubtful how far this being interferes in the affairs of mankind. He has often 'pondered in his heart whether it be Chance or God that regulates human fortune,' but can find no clear or certain answer[5]. It is true that in most of the passages where the question is referred to, the existence of an overruling Providence, that punishes the wicked and rewards the good, is strenuously asserted[6]. But sentiments of this kind had come to be part of the conventional language of the tragic stage, and might be placed with dramatic propriety in the mouths of the characters, without implying any certain conviction on the part of Euripides. On the other hand, in one of the fragments of the Bellerophon, the notion of divine government is scornfully

[1] Frag. 913.

[2] Frag. 1018 *ὁ νοῦς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐστιν ἐν ἑκάστῳ θεός.* Cic. Tusc. I. 26 'ergo animus, ut ego dico, divinus est, ut Euripides audet dicere, deus est.' Troad. 885 *ὅστις ποτ' εἶ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι, | Ζεύς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν.* Clemens Alex., Strom. p. 717 *ἐν δὲ τῷ Πειρίθῳ δράματι καὶ τάδε τραγῳδεῖ· 'Σὲ τὸν αὐτοφυᾶ τὸν ἐν αἰθερίῳ | ῥύμβῳ πάντων φύσιν ἐμπλέξαν θ' | ὃν περὶ μὲν φῶς κ.τ.λ.' ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸν δημιουργὸν νοῦν εἴρηκεν.* The Peirithous, however, was ascribed by some of the ancient critics to Critias (Athen. p. 496).

[3] Frag. 941 *ὁρᾷς τὸν ὑψοῦ τόνδ' ἄπειρον αἰθέρα | καὶ γῆν περιξ ἔχοντ' ὑγραῖς ἐν ἀγκάλαις; | τοῦτον νόμιζε Ζῆνα, τόνδ' ἡγοῦ θεόν.* Frag. 877 *ἀλλ' αἰθὴρ τίκτει σε, κόρα, | Ζεὺς ὃς ἀνθρώποις ὀνομάζεται.* So frag. 919. In frag. 487, however, air is described as the *οἴκησις Διός.*

[4] Troad. 886 *Ζεύς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν.* Cp. Hel. 514, Alc. 965.

[5] Frag. 901. Cp. Hec. 488–491 *ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξω; πότερά σ' ἀνθρώπους ὁρᾶν; | ἢ δόξαν ἄλλως τήνδε κεκτῆσθαι μάτην | ψευδῆ, δοκοῦντας δαιμόνων εἶναι γένος, | τύχην | δὲ πάντα τἀν βροτοῖς ἐπισκοπεῖν;* Cp. also frag. 900.

[6] Ion 1620–1623. Suppl. 594–597, 734–736. Herc. Fur. 757–759, 772. Phoen. 256–260. Bacch. 882–892. Frags. 222, 223, 255, 352, 391, 506, 835, 918 (Nauck's Trag. Graec. Frag., second edition).

rejected; and the speaker points, in proof, to the prosperity of tyrants, and the oppression of the weak by the strong[1]. But here again the passage is clearly inserted only for dramatic reasons, and the general tendency of the play, as appears from other fragments, is to show that 'the happiness of the wicked is unstable[2].' The real sentiments of Euripides are seen rather in those expressions of doubt and perplexity to which he occasionally gives utterance. The prevalence of evil was a problem which appeared to him to be insoluble. His hopes as well as his difficulties are embodied in the chorus of the Hippolytus, where it is said that 'the thought of God's Providence, as it enters the heart, mightily assuages sorrow; but when I think to understand it aright, I am left at fault, on beholding the fortunes and the deeds of mankind[3].'

The influence of Anaxagoras on the mind of Euripides has already been noticed. It is seen still further in his love of physical science, in which he follows, to a large extent, the teachings of his master[4]. He describes the world as originally in a state of chaos. Earth and Air were first evolved from the amorphous mass, and by their marriage begot all created things. Air is the 'father of men and gods.' Earth, 'receiving in her womb the watery drops of rain, brings forth mortal men, brings forth herbage, and the tribes of wild beasts, whence with justice she is called the mother of all things.' Nothing is destroyed; death is only a dissolution into primitive elements. 'The earthy

[1] Frag. 286.

[2] Ibid. 303.

[3] Hipp. 1102–1107.

[4] The older critics, such as Valkenaer (Diatribe in Eur. pp. 25–144), were inclined to exaggerate the influence of Anaxagoras on Euripides, as Decharme (Euripide, p. 36 foll.) has clearly shown. Thus the account of the Nile's overflow in Hel. 1–3 is not peculiarly Anaxagorean, but appears already in Aeschylus, frag. 293. The βῶλος ἀλύσεσι χρυσέαισι τεταμένα of Orest. 982 is in all probability not the sun (the λίθος διάπυρος of Anaxagoras), but the rock suspended over the head of Tantalus; although it is true that, according to Diog. Laert. 2. 10, the sun was called a χρυσέα βῶλος in the Phaethon. At the same time Wilamowitz appears to go too far in denying that there is any trace of Anaxagorean doctrine in Euripides (Analect. Eur. p. 163 foll.). The instances given in the text are a proof to the contrary. Though Euripides has no fixed opinions, and sometimes follows his master, sometimes abandons him, still his occasional indebtedness cannot be disputed.

returns to earth, the ethereal is restored to the vault of heaven,' and thus in course of time they both combine into new shapes and forms. All these theories are a reproduction of the teachings of Anaxagoras, and are expounded in verses of supreme beauty[1]. But the atoms of Anaxagoras, infinite and homogeneous, which form the ultimate basis of matter, have no place in the descriptions of Euripides. On the other hand, he follows Empedocles in introducing Love as the great motive principle in creation. 'It is Love which causes Earth to yearn for rain, when the parched ground, barren with drought, has need of moisture. It is Love which makes the sacred Heaven, swollen with rain, to sink into the lap of Earth. And when these twain are commingled, they beget and nourish all things[2].' This brief account of the physical theories of Euripides illustrates the eclectic character of his speculations, and his predilection for everything which was grand, imaginative, and poetical.

As to the state beyond the grave, only vague surmises are to be found in Euripides. The body returns to earth, and the soul, 'quenched like a falling star,' vanishes into the air from whence it came[3]. Whether it there retains individual consciousness is one of those mysteries which 'darkness veils in impenetrable clouds.' At times he seems inclined to hold, with Heracleitus, that the present life is really death, and that death is an awakening to a nobler existence[4]. The doctrine, also, of future rewards and punishments is asserted or suggested

[1] Frags. 484, 839, 1023 (in Nauck's second edition). The origin of the world out of Chaos, and the indestructibility of matter, are undoubtedly Anaxagorean doctrines. Decharme, however (Euripide, p. 39), denies that the functions here assigned to Air and Earth have any counterpart in his teachings. But cp. Irenaeus adv. Haer. 2. 14 'Anaxagoras autem . . . dogmatizavit facta animalia decidentibus e coelo in terram seminibus.' Theoph. Hist. Plant. 3. 2 *Ἀναξαγόρας μὲν τὸν ἀέρα πάντων φάσκων ἔχειν σπέρματα καὶ ταῦτα συγκαταφερόμενα τῷ ὕδατι γεννᾶν τὰ φυτά.*

[2] Frag. 898.

[3] Suppl. 553 *πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα, | τὸ σῶμα δ' ἐς γῆν.* Frag. 971 *ὁ δ' ἄρτι θάλλων σάρκα διοπετὴς ὅπως | ἀστὴρ ἀπέσβη, πνεῦμ' ἀφεὶς ἐς αἰθέρα.*

[4] Frag. 638 *τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ τὸ ζῆν μέν ἐστι κατθανεῖν, | τὸ κατθανεῖν δὲ ζῆν κάτω νομίζεται;* Hipp. 194–197 *δυσέρωτες δὴ φαινόμεθ' ὄντες | τοῦδ' ὅτι τοῦτο στίλβει κατὰ γῆν, | δι' ἀπειροσύνην ἄλλου βιότου | κοὐκ ἀπόδειξιν τῶν ὑπὸ γαίας.* Cp. also frag. 833.

in one or two passages[1]. But in other places a different opinion prevails. When a man dies, it is said, he 'vanishes into nothing,' and becomes 'as though he had never been born[2]'; and there is 'no happiness' beyond the grave[3]. The belief in the immortality of the soul is even described as a fear-inspiring creed; for 'if sorrows await men after death, I know not where one should turn for refuge, since death is reckoned the mightiest healer of affliction[4].'

Euripides, like Sophocles, is often supposed to have taken a pessimistic view of human destiny, and many passages may be collected from his writings to the effect that 'life is but calamity,' and that 'it is better for a man never to have been born[5].' Above all, there are the pathetic lines in which he says that 'we should weep when a man is born into the world, because of the sorrows that await him; but when he dies and rests from his labours, we should bear him forth to burial with joy and gladness[6].' Still, the significance of these utterances, taken from a long series of tragedies, should not be overrated. Much more important is the long speech in the Supplices, where the whole question is discussed, and where Euripides appears to be stating his deliberate opinion. He decides that on the whole the good outbalances the evil in human life. 'Some men,' he tells us, 'assert that there is more of sorrow than of joy upon the earth. A diverse opinion is mine; for I hold that the good exceeds the evil. Were it not so, we had ceased to live[7].'

§ 8. *Political and Social Opinions.*

The fondness of Euripides for philosophical digressions has already been noticed as one of his characteristics. Like the

[1] Hel. 1013–1016 *καὶ γὰρ τίσις τῶνδ' ἐστὶ τοῖς τε νερτέροις | καὶ τοῖς ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις· ὁ νοῦς | τῶν κατθανόντων ζῇ μὲν οὔ, γνώμην δ' ἔχει | ἀθάνατον, εἰς ἀθάνατον αἰθέρ' ἐμπεσών.* Alc. 743–746 *χαῖρε· πρόφρων σε χθόνιός θ' Ἑρμῆς | Ἅιδης τε δέχοιτ'· εἰ δέ τι κἀκεῖ | πλέον ἔστ' ἀγαθοῖς, τούτων μετέχουσ' | Ἅιδου νύμφῃ παρεδρεύοις.*

[2] Troad. 631–633. Iph. Aul. 1250. Frag. 532.

[3] Orest. 1084.

[4] Heracleid. 591–596.

[5] e.g. Hipp. 190. Alc. 802. Iph. Aul. 161. Iph. Taur. 572. Frags. 285, 908, 966.

[6] Frag. 449.

[7] Suppl. 195–218.

other dramatists of the fifth century he regarded tragedy as an instrument of instruction, and the tragic poet as a teacher of wisdom to the common people[1]. But while the lessons of the older poets had been enforced in the deep religious motive which ran through the whole play, Euripides, as we have seen, adopts a different method. He lays far less emphasis on the general purport of his dramas, and conveys his teaching in the way of occasional maxims and discussions, with which the dialogue is profusely strewn. His works are a mine of gnomic reflexion, almost every important question of political, moral, and social science being reviewed or debated in one place or another. Much of this moralising is of the conventional type, and possesses no features of special interest. But it may be worth while to collect together in the present section some of his more characteristic ideas, in which his individual temperament is best displayed.

As far as political theories are concerned[2], he re-echoes the ordinary Athenian detestation of tyranny and oligarchy, and the Athenian enthusiasm for democratic institutions[3]. Freedom is a 'priceless name,' and the man who enjoys it, though poor otherwise, has a 'great possession[4].' The advantages of democracy are eloquently described by Theseus as consisting in equal laws, free speech, protection from outrage, and the encouragement of talent[5]. But the democracy favoured by Euripides is to be of a moderate type, in which neither rich nor poor have excessive influence[6]. The rich are always 'striving to increase

[1] Cp. the story in Val. Max. 3. 7. 1, that when the people clamoured against a passage in one of his plays, and demanded that it should be struck out, he came forward and told them that his business was to teach, and not to be taught ('progressus in scenam dixit se ut eum doceret, non ut ab eo disceret, componere solere'). This tale, whether true or not, at any rate expresses the feelings of the old tragic poets in regard to their vocation. Cp. also Aristoph. Ran. 1054–1056 *τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν | ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖς ἡβῶσιν δὲ ποιηταί. | πάνυ δὴ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.*

[2] See Schenkl, Die politischen Anschauungen des Euripides (Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien, 1862, pp. 357 foll., 485 foll.). Decharme, Euripide, p. 185 foll.

[3] Cp. Suppl. 238, 429–431, 444–446, 450–455. Ion 621–631. Hipp. 1013–1015.

[4] Frag. 275.

[5] Suppl. 429–455.

[6] Frag. 626 *δήμῳ δὲ μήτε πᾶν ἀναρτήσῃς κράτος | μήτ' αὖ κακώσῃς, πλοῦτον ἔντιμον τιθείς.* Suppl. 244.

their wealth'; the poor, 'cheated by the tongues of bad leaders,' are ever ready to attack the wealthy classes[1]. Moreover a humble labourer, however intelligent, has no leisure to devote to politics, and is easily led astray by the demagogues, whose plausibility and unscrupulous ambition are frequently denounced by Euripides[2]. It is in the middle class that he places his trust, and especially in the class of farmers—men who cultivate their own lands, and seldom visit the city and the market-place, and who, 'though not beautiful in shape,' are 'courageous, shrewd in argument, and honest and blameless in their lives[3].'

Many passages in the writings of Euripides appear to refer to contemporary politics, and one or two of his plays are supposed to have been written with a political purpose. But the allusions are all so indefinite, after the manner of Greek tragedy, that no very certain conclusions can be deduced. The general result is to show that, though he occasionally displays a patriotic hatred of Sparta, his prevalent feeling throughout the Peloponnesian War was in favour of peace, and that he was never a blind adherent of the war party, as he is sometimes said to have been. The Heracleidae, which was composed about the time of the outbreak of the war, has been described by some critics as a political drama, written in favour of Pericles and his policy. In this play, no doubt, the Athenians are represented as successfully resisting the unjust demands of a Peloponnesian state. But they enter on the war with reluctance, and their sentiments are all in favour of peace[4]. Moreover the Cresphontes, which was produced at the same time, contains a chorus which is inspired by the most passionate desire for repose and tranquillity[5]. It can hardly be contended, therefore, that in these

[1] Suppl. 238–243.

[2] Ibid. 232–237, 412 416, 420–422. Orest. 902–908. Hec. 254–257. Hipp. 989.

[3] Suppl. 244, 245 *τριῶν δὲ μοιρῶν ἡ 'ν μέσῳ σώζει πόλεις | κόσμον φυλάσσουσ' ὄντιν' ἂν τάξῃ πόλις.* Orest. 917–922.

[4] See especially Heracleid. 371–380.

[5] Frag. 453 *εἰρήνα βαθύπλουτε καὶ | καλλίστα μακάρων θεῶν, | ζῆλός μοι σέθεν ὡς χρονίζεις. | δέδοικα δὲ μὴ πρὶν πόνοις | ὑπερβάλῃ με γῆρας, | πρὶν σὰν χαρίεσσαν προσιδεῖν ὥραν | καὶ καλλιχόρους ἀοιδὰς | φιλοστεφάνους τε κώμους. | ἴθι μοι, πότνια, πόλιν.*

The date of the Cresphontes has been ingeniously deduced by Wilamowitz (Hermes, 11, p. 301) from a passage in

two dramas Euripides appears as a fomenter of war. And at a late date his Erectheus, with its peaceful sentiments, is said by Plutarch to have contributed, in some degree, to the cessation of hostilities[1].

After the conclusion of the peace of Nicias in 421, politics at Athens took a fresh turn. The non-fulfilment of some of the conditions of the treaty had excited among the Athenians a deep distrust and hatred of Sparta. Alcibiades, for private reasons, fostered this spirit of indignation, advocated the renewal of the war, and as a part of his policy brought about the alliance between Athens and Argos. Euripides is often supposed to have supported his measures, but it is difficult to see on what evidence. It is true that in the Supplices, produced shortly before the treaty with Argos, the old legendary friendship between Athens and Argos is exhibited in glowing colours[2]. But the play, in other respects, is full of violent denunciations of war. The unscrupulousness of those party leaders who foster strife for personal motives, in order to gain office and wealth; and the stupidity of the people, who vote for war in a moment of excitement, without regarding the consequences, are censured in the strongest language[3]. Again, in the Andromache, exhibited a year or two afterwards, Euripides reflects the prevailing animosity against Sparta, by his odious delineation of the Spartan heroes of the drama, and by his long tirade against the Lacedaemonian character and institutions[4].

Amm. Marcell. 28. 4. 27, where there is a description of certain senators who are gracious enough when borrowing, but 'cum adiguntur ut reddant, ita cothurnatos videbis et turgidos ut Heraclidas illos Cresphontem et Temenum putes.' He conjectures that these three plays formed a trilogy, and that Ammianus is quoting their names from some didascalia which he had met with, but only partially understood.

[1] Plut. Nicias, c. 9.

[2] Cp. Suppl. 1165–1195.

[3] Suppl. 231–237 ἀπώλεσας πόλιν, | νέοις παραχθείς, οἵτινες τιμώμενοι | χαίρουσι, πολέμους τ' αὐξάνουσ' ἄνευ δίκης, | φθείροντες ἀστούς, ὁ μὲν ὅπως στρατηλατῇ, | ὁ δ' ὡς ὑβρίζῃ δύναμιν ἐς χεῖρας λαβών, | ἄλλος δὲ κέρδους οὕνεκ', οὐκ ἀποσκοπῶν | τὸ πλῆθος εἴ τι βλάπτεται πάσχον τάδε. This passage seems to be a deliberate attack on Alcibiades and his party. Ibid. 481–485 ὅταν γὰρ ἔλθῃ πόλεμος ἐς ψῆφον πόλεως | οὐδεὶς ἑθ' αὑτοῦ θάνατον ἐκλογίζεται, | τὸ δυστυχὲς δὲ τοῦτ' ἐς ἄλλον ἐκτρέπει· | εἰ δ' ἦν παρ' ὄμμα θάνατος ἐν ψήφου φορᾷ, | οὐκ ἄν ποθ' Ἑλλὰς δοριμανὴς ἀπώλλυτο. Cp. also 726–730, 744–749, 949–954.

[4] Androm. 445–463, 595–601, 724–726.

But to suppose, on these grounds, that the play was a political manifesto, and that Euripides was used by Alcibiades as a tool for the promotion of his views, is to raise a very large superstructure on a very slender foundation. The notion that Euripides was an intimate associate of Alcibiades appears to be unsupported by any reliable evidence[1]; nor can it be said that the Andromache, apart from the invective against Sparta, is a play of a political complexion.

To turn next to social and moral questions. In the spirit in which he approaches these matters Euripides, like his friend Socrates, is much in advance of the ordinary opinion of his age. Though at times a thorough Greek in his ideas and prejudices, he displays in general more sympathy and feeling for others than was common in the fifth century. His humane disposition is especially observable in his views about slaves. It is true that he regards them as a necessity, and the abolition of slavery is a notion that never occurs to him[2]. Nor is he ignorant of their vices[3]. But he wishes to improve their condition, and to raise the estimation in which they are held. He introduces, with a frequency which denotes deliberate purpose, examples of their devotion and fidelity; and draws pleasing pictures of friendly intercourse between master and servant. Creusa treats the old slave of the family as a sympathetic companion, and expresses her gratitude for his services in touching terms; and the slave of Admetus, bewailing the death of his mistress, exclaims that she was 'a mother to the whole household[4].'

In these sentiments he is at one with Socrates; but his views

[1] Euripides was said to have written an ode in honour of Alcibiades' victory at the Olympic Games (for the fragment see Bergk, Poet. Lyr. Graec. p. 591). But Plutarch regards the authorship as doubtful (Demosth. c. 1 *ὁ μὲν γράψας τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ τῆς Ὀλυμπίασι ἱπποδρομίας εἰς Ἀλκιβιάδην ἐγκώμιον, εἴτ' Εὐριπίδης, ὡς ὁ πολὺς κρατεῖ λόγος, εἴθ' ἕτερός τις ἦν*).

[2] Cp. frag. 1019 *δούλοισι γάρ τοι ζῶμεν οἱ γ' ἐλεύθεροι.*

[3] They are 'ruled by their bellies' (frag. 49), easily spoiled by prosperity (frags. 48, 51), often untrustworthy (frag. 86).

[4] Ion 725–734, Alc. 765–771. Cp. Hel. 1640 (where the slaves are willing to die in defence of their mistress), Iph. Aul. 303–316 (the courage and fidelity of Agamemnon's slave), Hel. 726–735 (the kindly feeling between Menelaus and his slave), Med. 84–86, Androm. 88, &c.

are not always of this liberal type. In his allusions to foreign nations, for example, he still shows the influence of national prejudice, and describes them as a race of slaves, guilty of the most atrocious vices, incapable of civilisation, and fit only to be the subjects of the Greeks[1]. In the same way, his notions on the question of revenge are widely opposed to those of Socrates. No trace is to be found in his writings of the Socratic doctrine that it is wrong to do evil to any man. On the contrary, he regards vengeance as 'the fairest prize that the gods can bestow upon mankind[2].' Nothing, in his eyes, is sweeter than 'to see your enemy's happiness brought low,' and no misfortune is more terrible than to 'become a laughing-stock to your adversary[3].'

The misogynism of Euripides has become a by-word, and not without some show of reason. Indeed, his plays are full of satirical reflexions on the deceitfulness and immorality of women, and on their vanities, jealousies, and petty animosities[4]. But in estimating the sincerity of these attacks considerable deductions have to be made. Many of them are due to dramatic necessity, and the circumstances of the play. Bellerophon, for instance, had received such treatment at the hands of Stheneboea, that it was only natural for him to exclaim that 'the name of woman was the greatest reproach upon earth[5].' Much, also, is to be

[1] Iph. Aul. 1400 *βαρβάρων δ' Ἑλλήνας ἄρχειν εἰκός.* Hel. 276 *τὰ βαρβάρων γὰρ δοῦλα πάντα πλὴν ἑνός.* Heracleid. 423 *οὐ γὰρ τυραννίδ' ὥστε βαρβάρων ἔχω.* Med. 536 *πρῶτον μὲν Ἑλλάδ' ἀντὶ βαρβάρου χθονὸς | γαῖαν κατοικεῖς, καὶ δίκην ἐπίστασαι | νόμοις τε χρῆσθαι, μὴ πρὸς ἰσχύος χάριν.* Androm. 173 *τοιοῦτον πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον γένος· | πατήρ τε θυγατρὶ παῖς τε μητρὶ μίγνυται | κόρη τ' ἀδελφῷ, διὰ φόνου δ' οἱ φίλτατοι | χωροῦσι, καὶ τῶνδ' οὐδὲν ἐξείργει νόμος.* Hec. 1199 *οὔποτ' ἂν φίλον | τὸ βάρβαρον γένοιτ' ἂν Ἕλλησιν γένος, | οὐδ' ἂν δύναιτο,* 1247 *τάχ' οὖν παρ' ὑμῖν ῥᾴδιον ξενοκτονεῖν· | ἡμῖν δέ γ' αἰσχρὸν τοῖσιν Ἕλλησιν τάδε.* Hel. 273, Heracleid. 131, &c.

[2] Bacch. 876–880.

[3] Heracleid. 444, 940. Cp. Ion 1334. Frag. 1092 (*ἐχθροὺς κακῶς δρᾶν ἀνδρὸς ἡγοῦμαι μέρος*).

[4] E.g. frag. 1059 *οὐδὲν οὕτω δεινὸν ὡς γυνὴ κακόν.* Hec. 1181 *γένος γὰρ οὔτε πόντος οὔτε γῆ τρέφει | τοιόνδ'· ὁ δ' ἀεὶ ξυντυχὼν ἐπίσταται.* Frag. 320 *δυσφύλακτον οὐδὲν ὡς γυνή.* Androm. 85 *πολλὰς ἂν εὕροις μηχανάς· γυνὴ γὰρ εἶ.* Phoen. 200 *ἡδονὴ δέ τις | γυναιξὶ μηδὲν ὑγιὲς ἀλλήλας λέγειν.* Cp. Androm. 152–166 (Hermione's vulgar pride in her riches, and the spite with which she exults in the prospect of making her slave-rival scrub the floors). Orest. 128 (where Helen is cutting off a lock of her hair for a funeral offering, and Electra maliciously remarks, *εἴδετε παρ' ἄκρας ὡς ἀπέθρισεν τρίχας | σώζουσα κάλλος*).

[5] Frag. 666.

ascribed to rhetorical exaggeration. Euripides, when once started on a given theme, was inclined to regard it as an opportunity for the display of his rhetorical powers, and to handle it with the reckless passion of an advocate. Thus the celebrated invective of Hippolytus against women, though partly justified by the facts of the situation, is pushed beyond the limits of reason and common sense by the fervour of the rhetorician[1]. There is also the influence of literary tradition to be taken into account, and the example of professedly satirical writers such as Archilochus and Simonides[2]. Hence on these various grounds we may perhaps hesitate to assume that Euripides was inspired by any special hostility against the female sex; and it is difficult to believe that a poet who created such characters as Alcestis and Iphigeneia could have been a misogynist at heart.

This same rhetorical dexterity and love of advocacy, to which we have just referred, induce him at times to espouse the cause of women, and to place in their mouths an enumeration of their wrongs and hardships, which is curiously modern in its vein of sentiment. He makes them complain that they have no careers, and no opportunities of distinction, and that their happiness is centred in their husband. If he should turn out badly, they have no further resource; while the husband, when discontented with his wife, can betake himself to his out-door occupations, or the society of his friends[3]. They lament, too, the injury which has been done to their reputation, owing to the fact of literature being in the hands of men; and impugn the justice of Providence, in burdening them with the terrible ordeal of childbirth[4].

But this occasional advocacy of feminine discontent is only assumed for dramatic purposes, and the real views of Euripides concerning the position and functions of women are essentially Attic. He is convinced that their honour and happiness are best

[1] Hipp. 616–650.

[2] Thus the chorus in the Medea (420) describe such attacks as a παλαιγενὴς δοιδή.

[3] Med. 230–247. Frags. 401, 1063.

[4] Med. 248–251, 409–428. Ion 1090–1098.

secured by seclusion and self-effacement[1]. In many passages, and especially in his description of Andromache, he has given us his conception of a model wife. She is one who remains contentedly in the house, avoiding the gay conversation of other women, satisfied with her own society, and preserving before her husband a 'silent tongue and quiet eye[2].' She is careless of personal adornment when her husband is absent, and when he is present worships him with unreflecting reverence[3]. 'If he is ugly, she thinks him handsome; if he speaks, she finds wisdom in his words, even when there is none[4].' She humours his frailties, treats his mistresses with kindness, offers her own breast to his bastard children, and by such 'virtuous conduct' wins and retains his affection[5].

Euripides frequently expresses his opinions on the subject of education and the rearing of the young; and the baneful effect of the great athletic festivals, in encouraging an exclusively athletic training, to the neglect of moral and practical qualities, is visited with strong condemnation. The athlete, 'slave of his jaw, and governed by his belly,' marches about in his youth 'full of glory, the city's ornament'; but in old age he is like 'a garment that has lost its nap.' Moreover these athletic exercises are of no benefit to a country. 'You cannot fight the enemy with quoits, or drive them out of the land with blows of the fist.' Wherefore it is the wise and the good who should be crowned with garlands[6]. These expressions of opinion, which are not peculiar to Euripides among the ancients, are all the more interesting on account of the tradition that he was himself brought up as an athlete.

§ 9. *The Extant Plays.*

Of the ninety-two plays which Euripides is said to have written, nine were selected, at an early period, for ordinary reading in schools. The names of the nine are the Hecuba,

[1] Frag. 521 *ἔνδον μένουσαν τὴν γυναῖκ' εἶναι χρεὼν | ἐσθλήν, θύρασι δ' ἀξίαν τοῦ μηδενός.* Cp. Androm. 943–946, Heracleid. 476–477, Hipp. 645–648, &c.

[2] Troad. 640–651.

[3] El. 1072–1075.

[4] Frag. 909.

[5] Androm. 222–227. Cp. El. 1051–1054.

[6] Frag. 282.

Orestes, Phoenissae, Andromache, Medea, Rhesus, Hippolytus, Alcestis, and Troades. These plays were enriched with brief scholia, compiled, probably in the fifth century, from the lengthy commentaries of the older grammarians. Being treated as representative dramas, they were widely studied and diffused, and have therefore been preserved down to the present day in numerous copies[1]. But in addition to the nine plays which formed the regular curriculum in the schools, ten other dramas of Euripides have also survived—the two Iphigeneias, the Supplices, Ion, Bacchae, Cyclops, Heracleidae, Helena, Hercules Furens, and Electra. These ten, however, possess no explanatory scholia, and are found in only two manuscripts; whence it is clear that they stand on a different footing from the nine, and that they were little known or studied in the later ages of Greek civilisation[2]. Their survival, though a proof of the superior popularity of Euripides, must be largely ascribed to accident. How they originally came together, and whether they were chosen by selection from the general mass of plays, or formed a mere chance combination that happened to be preserved, is uncertain[3].

[1] Dindorf, Praef. ad Schol. Eur., Nauck's Euripides, xli–xliii. Wilamowitz (Analect. Eur. pp. 46–51) supposes that the Bacchae belonged originally to this list of select plays. But his arguments, which are too minute and elaborate for reproduction, depend largely on conjecture.

[2] Dindorf, l.c., Nauck, l.c. During the Byzantine period the course of studies was still further restricted, the number of select dramas being reduced to three —the Hecuba, Orestes, and Phoenissae. The voluminous commentaries of the Byzantine scholars are practically confined to these three plays.

[3] According to Wilamowitz (Analect. Eur. p. 136 foll.) these plays were a survival from some collection in which a semi-alphabetical arrangement prevailed. If we place them in the order which is denoted by certain numbers affixed to them in the Laurentian MS., they stand as follows—Βάκχαι, Ἑλένη, Ἠλέκτρα, Ἡρακλῆς, Κύκλωψ, Ἡρακλεῖδαι, Ἴων, Ἱκετίδες, Ἰφιγένειαι. Now the Bacchae, according to his theory, belonged originally to the other group; and the Cyclops he supposes to have got into its present place by accident. This being assumed, the remaining plays represent the end of the letter E, all the letter H, and part of I. Θ has been omitted. The fact that collections of dramas were sometimes arranged in this rough and ready way, titles of the same initial letter being grouped together, though the general order was not strictly alphabetical, is proved, he thinks, by an inscription from the Piraeus (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 992), in which several plays of Euripides are found to be actually so distributed, viz.

Σκύριοι Σθενέβ[οια Σκίραν

We have seen that the seven select dramas of Sophocles consisted mainly of masterpieces. But it is impossible to say the same of the nine which were chosen from Euripides. On comparing these nine with the ten others to which they were preferred, one thing is manifest, that the principle on which the choice was made cannot have been solely that of intrinsic merit. No vagary of taste could have placed the Rhesus, the Andromache, and the Troades before the Bacchae and the Iphigeneia in Tauris. Indeed, we know from various sources that, in the opinion of the ancients themselves, the Bacchae and the Iphigeneia ranked among the greatest plays of Euripides, while the Andromache was regarded as 'second-rate,' and the Rhesus as of dubious authorship[1]. These facts justify the remark which was made in a previous section, that Euripides has not been altogether fortunate in the preservation of his plays. They give us all the more reason for regretting the loss of certain other works, such as the Antiope, the Andromeda, and the Cresphontes, which were placed in the highest rank by the ancients, and which we may therefore suppose to have been far superior to many of the surviving tragedies[2].

The chronology of the extant plays of Euripides is a matter of considerable interest, because of the light which it throws on his poetical career, and on his various advances and retrogressions in the art of tragedy[3]. The date of nine of them is fixed by direct evidence[4]; as for the remaining ten we have to

σά]τυρο[ι] Σίσυ[φος Συλεύς
Θυέστης Θησε[ύς Δίκτυς
Δανάη Πολύι[δος Πελιά
δες· Ἀλαί· Πλ[εισθένης Πα
λαμήδης Π
Πηλεὺς Πε[ιρίθους Πρω
τεσίλαος
Φ.λοκτήτη[ς Φαέθων Φοῖ
νιξ Φρῖξος Φ[οίνισσαι
. . . Ἀφιδν[αι, κ.τ.λ.

[1] Argum. Androm. and Rhes. The Iphigeneia in Tauris is one of the plays most frequently cited and commended by Aristotle (Poet. cc. 11, 14, 16, 17). The popularity of the Bacchae is proved by innumerable references and imitations in later literature (see Patin's Euripide, 2. p. 239).

[2] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 53 describes the Andromeda as 'one of the most beautiful' of the plays of Euripides, and also includes the Hypsipyle and Antiope among his finer works. On the celebrity of the Cresphontes see Plut. de Esu Carn. c. 5, Aristot. Poet. c. 14.

[3] See Zirndorfer, de chronologia fabularum Euripidearum, Marburg, 1839; Fix, Preface to the Didot edition of Euripides, Paris, 1843.

[4] Alcestis, 438 B.C. Medea, 431. Hippolytus, 428. Troades, 415. Helena,

depend on various casual indications. Chief among these is the versification. It is evident, from an examination of the plays of known date, that the treatment of the iambic trimeter in Euripides tended to become more and more irregular, beginning with the formal dignity of Sophocles, and approximating latterly to the freedom of ordinary speech[1]. Hence it follows that the comparative frequency of resolved syllables in a play is an indication, if not of the exact year, at any rate of the general period, to which it belongs. Another valuable piece of evidence is afforded by the presence of trochaic tetrameters in the dialogue. They are found in only nine dramas, and six of these are of late date[2]; whence the presumption is a strong one that the remaining three should be ascribed to the same period. References also to passing events, if sufficiently precise and clear, are sometimes of value; and parodies in Aristophanes enable us occasionally to fix the latest possible limit to the time of composition. Lastly, the choruses may be cited as evidence, according to their comparative relevancy and precision of style; though this line of inference should not be unduly pressed, since it has been shown that Euripides, even in his latest years, is far from being consistent in his treatment of the chorus.

Such, then, are the varieties of proof on which we have to rely. When there is only one kind, the result can only be regarded as conjectural; but when several of them combine in pointing towards the same conclusion, that conclusion becomes almost a certainty. In the following pages the plays have been arranged in chronological order, based upon the evidence

412. Orestes, 408. Phoenissae about 407. Bacchae and Iph. Aul., soon after 406. See the notices of these plays.

[1] In the following table the plays are arranged in succession, according to the average number of trisyllabic feet found in every hundred lines of iambic dialogue. Hippolytus, 5. Alcestis, 7. Medea, 7. Heracleidae, 7. Hecuba, 9. Rhesus, 9. Andromache, 15. Supplices, 17. Electra, 19. Hercules Furens, 20. Troades, 24. Iph. Taur., 25. Ion, 27. Helena, 30. Phoenissae, 32. Cyclops, 38. Bacchae, 39. Iph. Aul., 41. Orestes, 45.

[2] The instances are as follows. Iph. Aul. 317–341, 855–916, 1338–1401. Bacch. 603–641. Phoen. 588–637, 1758–1763. Orest. 728–806, 1506–1536, 1549–1553. Helen. 1621–1641. Troad. 444–461. Iph. Taur. 1204–1233. Ion, 510–565, 1250–1260, 1606–1622. Herc. Fur. 855–874. Of these plays the first six are known to belong to the poet's latest period.

just described. The details will be given in connexion with each individual drama.

(1) *The Rhesus.*

There appears to be no doubt that a play called Rhesus was composed and exhibited by Euripides, and that it was one of his earliest productions[1]. But the existing Rhesus differs so widely in tone and character from all the rest of his tragedies, that its authenticity has often been called in question. Some of the ancient critics thought it was more like the work of Sophocles[2]; their opinion, however, has found little favour in recent times. Modern scholars have suggested that it was written by the younger Euripides, or by an Attic poet of the fourth century, or by some grammarian of the Alexandrian age[3]. Whichever of these theories we adopt, we should have to suppose that the genuine Rhesus had disappeared in the course of the fifth century, and that the spurious drama was substituted in its place. This hypothesis is not in itself very probable, and it is open to doubt whether the objections to the authenticity of the play are really insurmountable. Arguments founded on the fact that the action takes place by night, or that the chorus leave the orchestra for a short interval, hardly deserve to be mentioned[4]. The formal pomp of the versification, and the prevalence of archaic words and epic usages, are qualities to be expected in the first efforts of a youthful poet, writing under the influence of Aeschylus. The active prominence of the chorus is explicable on the same grounds. The superficiality of the plot, the lack of force and pathos, and the absence of the usual prologue, and of the customary

[1] Argum. Rhes. *ἐν μέντοι ταῖς διδασκαλίαις ὡς γνήσιον ἀναγέγραπται.* Schol. Rhes. 529 *Κράτης ἀγνοεῖν φησι τὸν Εὐριπίδην τὴν περὶ τὰ μετέωρα θεωρίαν διὰ τὸ νέον ἔτι εἶναι ὅτε τὸν Ῥῆσον ἐδίδασκε.*

[2] Argum. Rhes. *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα ἔνιοι νόθον ὑπενόησαν· τὸν γὰρ Σοφόκλειον μᾶλλον ὑποφαίνει χαρακτῆρα.*

[3] See Vater's Rhesus, Berlin, 1837; Hagenbach, De Rheso tragoedia, Basel, 1863; Wilamowitz, Analect. Eur. p. 147 foll.

[4] The contention that four actors are required at l. 642 is also quite unfounded. Odysseus and Diomed leave the stage at 637.

displays of rhetoric and sententious reflexion, may likewise be ascribed to the immaturity of the poet, whose individual characteristics were not yet fully developed. On the whole, then, until weightier considerations are adduced on the other side, it seems safer to follow many of the ancient commentators, who had no hesitation in assigning the play to Euripides[1].

The Rhesus has little claim to depth or impressiveness. The story of a night assault upon a camp, and of the successful slaughter of an enemy, is a subject better adapted for epic than dramatic poetry; it fails to excite that moral interest which is essential to a great drama. The merits of the play lie rather in its rapid movement, and in the picturesque and lively exhibition of the operations of war. The night alarm, the strange fires, and the general perplexity in the Trojan camp; the gradual approach of dawn, heralded by the songs of birds and the lowing of cattle; the weariness of the sentinels, the stealthy entry of Odysseus, and his narrow escape from capture in the dim morning light—all these vicissitudes are vividly represented in a series of spirited and exciting scenes. The story is taken in most of its details from the Iliad; but there is one important difference. Odysseus and Diomed have heard nothing about Rhesus when they enter the Trojan lines, and it is Athene who supplies the information. Her appearance in the midst of the darkness and confusion seems to have been contrived in order to give a sort of supernatural air to the piece, and to impart some of that grandeur and dignity which it otherwise lacks.

(2) *The Alcestis.*

The Alcestis, the only Greek example of a tragi-comedy, was brought out in 438, and formed the last of a group of four plays[2]. It must have been substituted, therefore, for the usual satyric drama. This fact accounts for its peculiar tone.

[1] Such was the opinion of the author of the Argument (ἡ περὶ τὰ μετάρσια δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πολυπραγμοσύνη τὸν Εὐριπίδην ὁμολογεῖ), and of the grammarians Crates, Dionysodorus, and Parmeniscus (Schol. Rhes. 508, 529).

[2] Argum. Alc. ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Γλαυκίνου . . . δεύτερος Εὐριπίδης Κρήσσαις, Ἀλκμαίωνι τῷ διὰ Ψωφίδος, Τηλέφῳ, Ἀλκήστιδι.

The comic scenes with which it is interspersed were apparently intended to reproduce, in a modified shape, the humours of the satyric style of composition [1]. We learn from the Cyclops, as well as from other sources, that two of the principal features in this kind of play were, first, its wild indecency and exaltation of the animal side of human nature, and secondly, its amusing picture of the selfish effrontery of the satyrs. Both these qualities are introduced into the Alcestis by Euripides. The gross sensuality of the satyrs is represented, in a more refined form, by the cheerful epicureanism of Hercules; their shameless impudence finds a counterpart in the dialogue between Admetus and Pheres [2]. In this well-known scene the unblushing egotism of father and son is depicted with humorous exaggeration. Admetus, whose life can only be saved by the substitution of a voluntary victim, gravely reproaches his father for neglecting to offer himself in place of Alcestis, and points out that for an old man, already on the brink of the grave, such a sacrifice would have been a graceful and becoming act. Pheres replies, with considerable spirit, that he enjoys his life far too much to lay down the small remainder from a mistaken sense of honour. If Admetus can find a series of wives as foolish as Alcestis, he may prolong his life to eternity; but he is much mistaken if he expects to bury his father before the proper time.

The chief defect of the play is the character of Admetus. His ready acquiescence in the death of Alcestis, in order to preserve his own life, is not only revolting in itself, but seems inconsistent with the agony of remorse which he elsewhere displays. His selfishness, however, might have been forgotten in the midst of the pathetic incidents of the tragedy, had not Euripides gone out of his way to bring it into fresh prominence by the deliberate insertion of the scene with Pheres. The case is one of those in which, for the sake of a humorous situation and an effective debate, he has not scrupled to degrade one of his characters, and to destroy the moral balance of the composition [3]. The

[1] Cp. Argum. Alc. *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμά ἐστι σατυρικώτερον, ὅτι εἰς χαρὰν καὶ ἡδονὴν καταστρέφει.*

[2] Alc. 606–740, 773–802.

[3] Sittl (Griech. Lit. p. 334) and many other scholars deny that Admetus would

love and devotion of Alcestis are drawn with such infinite pathos, that the unworthiness of her husband, as the object of the sacrifice, jars upon the feelings; and it is a striking testimony to the beauty of the play, that in spite of this vital flaw it should have won such universal popularity.

Modern poets, in their imitations of the Alcestis, have invented various devices, in order to improve the plot, raise the character of Admetus, and supply him with a worthy motive for his conduct. Alfieri, in his Alceste Seconda, supposes that Alceste had been the first to hear the oracle, and that she had devoted herself to death before the others could interfere. Admeto and Fereo are horrified on making the discovery, and endeavour to prevent the sacrifice, and to die in her place; but their efforts are too late. By this device the moral tone of the play is much improved, and the characters all become patterns of virtue. The general result, however, is far from successful; and the continual protestations of devotion and self-sacrifice, uttered from every quarter throughout the whole of the action, become wearisome by their repetition. Browning, in Balaustion's Adventure, has also briefly sketched a novel version of the story. He supposes that Admetus has resolved to abandon the ways of his ancestors, and to govern, not for his own advantage, but for that of his subjects. In the midst of these splendid dreams for the restoration of the golden age, he is suddenly confronted with death. Alcestis offers to die in his place. He at first refuses, but is at length persuaded to consent, in order that his glorious projects may not perish. This conception of his conduct is one of great beauty, and gives a new significance to the legend; still, it is possible that a play written on these lines might suffer from the same defect as that of

have been regarded as a peculiarly selfish character by the ancients. According to their view, women and old men were held in such slight estimation by the Athenians, that it would have seemed perfectly natural for a man in the prime of life to expect that his wife and his father should be ready to die for him. As for the scene between Admetus and Pheres, they consider that Euripides was so entirely destitute of humour, as to be unconscious of its comic tendency. These explanations, however, appear to me to exaggerate the callousness of the ancients and the dullness of Euripides. See the admirable discussion of the question in Weil's Alcestis, p. 4 foll.

Alfieri. Indeed, the fable of Alcestis, considered as a subject for pure tragedy, presents inherent difficulties which perhaps no dramatist could entirely overcome.

The story had already been dramatised by Phrynichus. Nothing, however, is known about his play, beyond the fact that it suggested to Euripides the introduction of Death, who comes in person to claim his victim[1]. Phrynichus probably followed the original form of the legend, in which the gods were said to have restored Alcestis of their own accord, as a reward for her piety[2]. Such a theme would be appropriate to the old lyrical drama; but the later tragedy required more variety of action. Euripides, therefore, to supply the deficiency, skilfully invented the interposition of Hercules, which not only adds diversity to the plot, but also gives occasion for one of the comic interludes which he wished to introduce.

Every critic has admired the pathos and dramatic effect of the final scene, in which Alcestis is brought back disguised as a stranger, and received at first with reluctance, until she is gradually recognised. Two points in the scene deserve notice. The first is the curious resemblance which it bears to the conclusion of the Winter's Tale, where Leontes is taken to see, as he imagines, the statue of his dead wife, and finds instead the living Hermione. The second is the silence of Alcestis, after her return from the grave. This silence is due, not to theatrical exigencies, and the absence of a third actor, as some critics have supposed, but to the deliberate choice of the poet[3]. For one who has just been restored from the darkness of the tomb, no form of words could be so appropriate as the mute and half-dazed torpor in which she stands[4]; and Alfieri, in his new version, by departing from the example set by Euripides, and placing a speech in her mouth, has spoiled one of the most thrilling effects of the original play.

[1] Servius on Virg. Aen. 4. 694.

[2] Plat. Symp. 179 c.

[3] The use of a third actor had already become habitual even in the life-time of Aeschylus, and there are several scenes in the Orestean trilogy in which three actors are introduced simultaneously.

[4] Dr. Verrall, however, considers the silence of Alcestis to be 'awkward and absurd' (Euripides the Rationalist, p. 69), and makes it one of the grounds for his new theory about the play.

(3) *The Medea.*

The Medea was produced in 431[1]; and the reference which it contains to the unpopularity of philosophers, and to the danger of placing 'new truths' before the multitude, clearly alludes to the prosecution of Anaxagoras, who was expelled from Athens for impiety in the course of the following year[2]. The play is one of the greatest of the extant dramas, and its celebrity in ancient times is proved by innumerable notices and imitations[3]. Its principal characteristics have been so frequently discussed in the preceding pages, that little more remains to be said[4]. The inconsistency of Medea's character, and her fluctuation between conflicting motives, were censured by some of the ancient critics; but it is a striking proof of their narrowness and insensibility, that they should have selected for criticism what is now generally regarded as the finest portion of the work[5]. The employment of supernatural means of escape is also mentioned by Aristotle as a fault[6]. Seeing, however, that Medea figures throughout the play as a magician, and accomplishes her vengeance largely through the aid of sorcery, her final departure on a car drawn by dragons can hardly be deemed inappropriate or incongruous. The moral of the tragedy, though not distinctly stated, is sufficiently obvious. The guilty partnership of Jason and Medea, which had been originally cemented by treachery and murder, ends, not in happiness, but in suspicion, jealousy, and merciless revenge.

The tradition concerning the slaughter of Medea's children was of ancient date, but differed, in one essential point, from the story as told by Euripides. According to the ancient version, the children were not slain by their mother, but by the

[1] Argum. Med. ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Πυθοδώρου ἄρχοντος . . . τρίτος Εὐριπίδης· Μήδεια, Φιλοκτήτης, Δίκτυς, Θερισταὶ σάτυροι.

[2] Med. 295–302. Diod. Sic. 12. 39.

[3] It is cited as his masterpiece in Anthol. Pal. 7. 50 ἦν δὲ τὰ Μηδείης Αἰητίδος ἄκρα χαράξῃς, | ἀμνήμων κείσῃ νερθεν· ἔα στεφάνους.

[4] See pp. 225, 230, 247, 249, 252.

[5] Argum. Med. μέμφονται δ' αὐτῷ τὸ μὴ πεφυλακέναι τὴν ὑπόκρισιν τῇ Μηδείᾳ, ἀλλὰ πεσεῖν εἰς δάκρυα ὅτε ἐπεβούλευσεν Ἰάσονι καὶ τῇ γυναικί.

[6] Poet. c. 15 φανερὸν οὖν ὅτι καὶ τὰς λύσεις τῶν μύθων ἐξ αὐτοῦ δεῖ τοῦ μύθου συμβαίνειν, καὶ μὴ ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ Μηδείᾳ ἀπὸ μηχανῆς.

people of Corinth, to prevent their succession to the throne[1]. The innovation introduced by Euripides is a noteworthy example of the skill with which the old mythology was adapted to the requirements of tragedy. The notion of a mother murdering her own offspring for the sake of revenge imparts to the legend a profound psychological significance of which there was previously no trace, and forms, in fact, the key-stone of the whole play.

We are told, on the authority of Aristotle and Dicaearchus, that the origination of this idea was due, not to Euripides, but to a certain poet called Neophron, who also wrote a Medea[2]. Three fragments of his play survive, and one of them, containing Medea's apostrophe to her soul, bears a considerable resemblance to the celebrated passage in the extant tragedy[3]. If the story is true, we owe a debt of gratitude to Neophron for having suggested to Euripides one of his most splendid creations. But several modern scholars have thrown doubt upon the tradition. Some of them imagine that the tale was invented by certain detractors of Euripides during the fourth century, and that the supposed fragments of Neophron were mere forgeries, manufactured in support of the accusation[4]. Others, pointing to traces of a double edition in the Medea as it now stands, suggest that the first version was brought out in the name of Neophron, and so led to a misapprehension about the authorship[5]. These theories, however, hardly commend them-

[1] Schol. Med. 273. Paus. 2. 3. 6.

[2] Argum. Med. *τὸ δρᾶμα δοκεῖ ὑποβαλέσθαι τὰ Νεόφρονος διασκευάσας, ὡς Δικαίαρχός τε περὶ τοῦ Ἑλλάδος βίου καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν ὑπομνήμασι.* Cp. Diog. Laert. 2. 134, Suidas v. *Νεόφρων*, who report a tradition that the Medea of Euripides was written by Neophron.

[3] Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 730.

[4] Wilamowitz, Hermes, 15, p. 487.

[5] Christ, Griech. Lit. p. 219. The evidence for a double edition is as follows: (1) Schol. Aristoph. Acharn. 119 quotes *ὦ θερμόβουλον σπλάγχνον* as from the Medea of Euripides, though it is not to be found in the present text. But the old grammarians make such frequent blunders in their citations, that it is unsafe to place too much reliance on their testimony. See p. 402. (2) Aristoph. Pax 1012 (*Μελάνθιον*) *εἶτα μονῳδεῖν ἐκ Μηδείας, | ὀλόμαν, ὀλόμαν, ἀποχηρωθεὶς | τὰς ἐν τεύτλοισι λοχευομένας.* There is no exact equivalent to this passage in the existing Medea. But it is doubtful whether Aristophanes is parodying Euripides at all. The Scholiast explains the lines, either as a reminiscence of Med. 97 *ἰώ μοί μοι, πῶς*

selves by their plausibility; and the authority of Aristotle and Dicaearchus is not lightly to be set aside. Nor can any stress be laid on the fact that, of all Neophron's plays, the Medea is the only one quoted by the grammarians; since it is clear that the sole importance of this poet, in the eyes of later generations, was due to the supposed indebtedness of Euripides. But after all the question is of little moment. The execution of a play, rather than its first conception, is the real test of poetic genius; and even if Euripides borrowed the idea of his Medea from another writer, the circumstance detracts in no way from his greatness.

(4) *The Heracleidae.*

The versification of the Heracleidae marks it as a composition of an early date[1]; and the subject of the plot, in which Athens is represented as threatened by a great Peloponnesian city, and doubtful about the policy of resistance, offers a close parallel to the condition of affairs at the commencement of the Peloponnesian War. Moreover, the solemn reference to an invasion of Attica by the descendants of Hercules appears to have been suggested by the Spartan inroads in 431 and the following years[2]. Hence there is much probability in the conclusion that the play came between the Medea and the Hippolytus, and that it was exhibited in 430 or 429[3].

ἂν ὀλοίμαν, or as a burlesque of a Medea written by Melanthius himself.

[1] See p. 283.

[2] ll. 1032–1037.

[3] It must have been written before 422 B.C., since l. 1007 is parodied in Vesp. 1160. Hence the supposition that the subject of the play—the invasion of Attica by the Argives—was suggested by the hostile attitude of Argos to Athens in 417, is proved to be false.

Equit. 214 is said by the Scholiast to be a parody of a line in the Heracleidae; and this fact, if true, would extend the latest possible limit of date as far back as 424 B.C. But no such line is found in the present text.

Fix (Chron. Fab. Eur. p. 9) considers that the promise of protection against invasion in ll. 1032–1037 would be absurd, if the play was written *after* the Spartan inroad of 431; and prefers to assign it to the period of the threatened invasion of Pleistonax in 445 B.C. (Thuc. I. 114, 2. 21). But the lines in the Heracleidae by no means imply that the invasion will not take place. What they assert is that Eurystheus will be on the side of the Athenians when it does occur.

The Heracleidae is essentially a patriotic work. It depicts the most glorious of the legendary achievements of Athens, exalting the piety and unselfishness of the Athenians, and throwing a poetical glamour over their local monuments and traditions. Though hardly a great play, it possesses many fine qualities. The style is less rhetorical and sententious than usual, and a certain archaic dignity of tone, and a general similarity in the situation, remind us of the Supplices of Aeschylus. The central scene, also, is one of great dramatic power. The fate of the fugitives hangs in the balance, and their safety can only be procured by the sacrifice of a maiden; but no victim is to be found, and there is a pause of anxious anticipation. At length Macaria comes forward and devotes her life in a speech of noble and touching eloquence. As a whole, however, the Heracleidae suffers from the same defect as the Andromache, owing to the abrupt transference of the interest in the concluding part. Iolaus and Demophon, after rousing the emotion of the spectators, disappear from view, and their place is taken, during the rest of the play, by Alcmene and Eurystheus, who form a poor substitute. Alcmene, in particular, with her violence of character, her insatiate thirst for revenge, and her indecent joy over the fate of her victim, excites more repulsion than sympathy. There are signs, too, of haste and carelessness in the conclusion of the tragedy. When Macaria leaves the stage we hear nothing further about her; the messenger, in describing the result of the battle, is silent on the subject of her sacrifice, and Alcmene, her own mother, never even asks the reason of her absence [1].

(5) *The Hippolytus.*

The Hippolytus, produced in 428 [2], is one of those plays which marked a new era in the history of the theatre, and in which the language of sexual passion, hitherto unknown to the

[1] The critics account for these omissions by supposing the loss of several verses, including that which is said to have been parodied by Aristophanes in the Equites (Schol. Equit. 214).

[2] Argum. Hipp. *ἐδιδάχθη ἐπὶ Ἐπαμείνονος ἄρχοντος . . . πρῶτος Εὐριπίδης.*

Attic stage, was for the first time allowed free utterance. The subject of the play was also dramatised by Sophocles in the Phaedra, though nothing is known about this work, not even whether it followed or preceded that of Euripides. But from the general character of the Sophoclean tragedy we may safely conclude that the story of Phaedra's love was handled by him with far greater reticence. The Hippolytus is justly described by the scholiast as 'among the finest' of the writings of Euripides[1]. The skilful management of the plot, the inexpressible beauty of the scenes in which Phaedra's passion is delineated, and the grandeur and pathos of the final reconciliation between father and son, place it in the highest rank of poetical compositions. The moral is emphasised more clearly than usual in the course of the opening dialogue, in which the old attendant vainly beseeches Hippolytus to pay due honour to a goddess that is 'celebrated among mortals,' and warns him of the danger of spiritual pride.

Euripides had already treated the story in another play, also called Hippolytus[2]; but not being satisfied with the result, he produced an emended version in the tragedy which we still possess. The two dramas continued to exist side by side in ancient times. The first Hippolytus, according to the scholiast, contained many things which were 'unseemly and censurable,' and appears to have resembled, in its general scheme, the tragedy of Seneca[3]. Phaedra was represented as intent on the avowal of her passion, and the nurse, so far from seconding her design, endeavoured to dissuade her by moral reasonings[4]. In

[1] Argum. Hipp. *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τῶν πρώτων.*

[2] This first play was called *Ἱππόλυτος καλυπτόμενος* (Poll. 9. 50, Schol. Theocr. 2. 10), a title of which the meaning is uncertain, but which has been explained by supposing, either that Hippolytus covered his head in shame during Phaedra's avowal of her love, or that his body was brought in covered with a mantle. The extant play is entitled *στεφανηφόρος*, the name referring to the crown which Hippolytus offers to Artemis in the opening scene. It was also called *στεφανίας*, and sometimes simply *δεύτερος* (Argum. Hipp.).

[3] Argum. Hipp. *ἐμφαίνεται δὲ ὕστερος γεγραμμένος. τὸ γὰρ ἀπρεπὲς καὶ κατηγορίας ἄξιον ἐν τούτῳ διώρθωται τῷ δράματι.* For the fragments of the first Hippolytus see Nauck, pp. 491–496.

[4] This may be inferred from two of the fragments of the lost Hippolytus (437 and 438), which are almost identical with ll. 209–212 of the nurse's speech in Seneca, in which she tries to prevent Phaedra from disclosing her passion.

all probability Phaedra disclosed her love in person to Hippolytus. After the repulse, instead of committing suicide, she waited for the success of her treacherous stratagem; then, stung with remorse, she sought the presence of Theseus, disclosed the whole truth, ascribed her fall to his coldness and neglect, and finally stabbed herself[1]. The 'unseemliness' of the tragedy would appear to have consisted in the greater shamelessness of Phaedra. The skill with which, in the second play, this feature was avoided, and the revelation of her secret brought about, not by her own will, but by the instrumentality of the nurse, has been described already[2].

The critics, while admiring the delicacy of the treatment, object that it leads to an inconsistency; and that a woman of such refined sensibilities as the second Phaedra would never have been capable of the atrocious accusation against Hippolytus. But there is a difference between crimes committed in the heat of passion, and in cold blood. If Phaedra had waited for the return of Theseus, as in the original version, and then made the charge, her conduct might have appeared unnatural. As it is, the whole deed is accomplished, beyond possibility of recall, under the impulse of her first agony. Frantic with shame at the discovery, and maddened by the unmerited and insensate invectives of Hippolytus, she rushes into the palace, hastily writes down her false narrative in a letter, and then forthwith slays herself, leaving not a moment for cooler reflexion. But though she is dead, the letter remains; and by this ingenious alteration of the story Euripides has contrived that the accusation shall be brought, without making Phaedra guilty of such cold-blooded treachery as would have been inconsistent with her previous character.

[1] Plut. de Aud. Poet. c. 8 πάλιν ὁρᾷς ὅτι (Εὐριπίδης) τὴν Φαίδραν προσεγκαλοῦσαν τῷ Θησεῖ πεποίηκεν ὡς διὰ τὰς ἐκείνου παρανομίας ἐρασθεῖσαν τοῦ Ἱππολύτου. From this passage it is clear that Phaedra survived Hippolytus, as in Seneca, and revealed the truth to Theseus.

[2] See p. 231.

(6) *The Hecuba.*

The Hecuba, exhibited about the year 425[1], is a play which consists in reality of two distinct parts, the first of these dealing with the sacrifice of Polyxena, the second with the vengeance exacted for the murder of Polydorus. The story of Polyxena formed part of the Sack of Troy, one of the epics of the Trojan Cycle[2]. The fate of Polydorus was variously described in ancient legend[3], but the particular form which the tale assumes in the Hecuba is not found before the time of Euripides, and may possibly have been his own invention. The play is remarkable for the grace and purity of the style, and abounds in striking scenes and beautiful passages. But as a whole it fails to produce much impression on the mind owing to the desultory character of the plot, and the absence of any necessary connexion between the successive parts, beyond that which is supplied by the person of Hecuba. Some, also, of the vices of Euripides begin to be apparent; and Hecuba's habit of discussing current questions of philosophy appears strangely out of place in a Trojan queen[4]. The choruses, too, have little reference to the immediate destinies of the principal characters. But at the same time they are exquisite specimens of poetry, and the description of the capture of Troy is one of the most beautiful lyrics in Euripides[5].

(7) *The Supplices.*

The Supplices is described in the argument as a 'panegyric on Athens[6].' Like the Heracleidae it deals with one of those

[1] The versification of the dialogue (the trisyllabic feet are only about nine per 100 lines, see p. 283) proves that the Hecuba was one of the earlier plays. It must have been exhibited before 422 B.C., since it is twice parodied in the Nubes (Nub. 1165 = Hec. 172, Nub. 718 = Hec. 162). The lines about Delos (462–465) are most probably a reference to the restoration of the Delian festival by the Athenians in 426 (Thuc. 3. 104). Hence the date of the play may be limited with fair certainty to 425–423 B.C.

[2] Proclus, Chrestom. (p. 484 in Gaisford's Hephaestion).

[3] According to Dictys 2. 18. 27, he was given by Polymestor to Ajax the son of Telamon, and stoned to death. In Hygin. fab. 109 Polymestor murders his own son by mistake, and is slain by Polydorus.

[4] E.g. ll. 591–603, 798–805, 814–819.

[5] ll. 905 foll.

[6] Argum. Suppl. τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα ἐγκώμιον Ἀθηνῶν.

famous old legends, always popular on the Attic stage, in which the chivalry of the Athenian character was gloriously displayed. It relates how the Thebans had prohibited the burial of the Argive chieftains, and how Athens, espousing the cause of the bereaved mothers, compelled the restitution of the bodies. The play was exhibited, in all probability, in the spring of 420, when the alliance with Argos was about to be concluded[1]. Three years previously the Thebans, after their victory at Delium, had violated the laws of Greece, by refusing permission to bury the Athenian soldiers. Under such circumstances the representation of the Supplices must have been peculiarly impressive. The solemn address of Athene at the close, enjoining eternal friendship between Athens and Argos, would sound like a divine admonition; and the whole course of the action could not fail to recall vividly the memory of the recent outrage at Delium.

The Supplices exhibits many of the faults which belong to the 'episodic' kind of tragedy. The plot, being naturally slight and devoid of incident, has been amplified by various accessories, such as the suicide of Evadne, and the long-continued pageantry of the funeral[2]. The recovery of the bodies is effected, not by persuasion, as in the Eleusinians of Aeschylus, but by military force, in order to give occasion for the description of the battle[3]; and the introduction of the long debate on forms of government is due to the same desire to eke out slender materials[4]. As a result the play lacks concentration. But it is powerfully written, and, from the spectacular point of

[1] The solemn inculcation of perpetual amity between Athens and Argos in ll. 1180–1195 obviously refers to the circumstances of the time. Hence two dates may be proposed, (1) 420, when the treaty between Athens and Argos was about to be concluded, (2) 418, when Argos deserted to the side of Sparta (in which case the lines must be regarded as a rebuke to the Argives for their treachery). But as the play evidently contains a further allusion to the action of the Thebans at Delium in 424, the earlier date is to be preferred. The character of the versification (see p. 283) shows that the Supplices belongs to the middle group of the extant plays.

[2] The story of Evadne may possibly have been a local myth at Eleusis. Cp. l. 1015, where she seems to allude to her future renown.

[3] Plut. Theseus, c. 29.

[4] ll. 399–456.

view, full of magnificent effects; and the absence of strong and continuous tragic interest would be partly counterbalanced before an Athenian audience by the frequent appeals to national pride and patriotism, and by the solemn allusions to the circumstances of the time.

(8) *The Andromache.*

The Andromache, we are told, was not exhibited at Athens; but whether it appeared elsewhere, or was never produced upon the stage, is uncertain[1]. The reference to the recent alliance with Argos points to the year 419 as the most probable date of composition[2]. The ordinary legend reappears in its main features, with the exception that the death of Neoptolemus is ascribed, not to a chance quarrel with the Delphians, but to the instigation of Orestes, in order to bring it into closer relationship with the plot[3]. In point of structure the Andromache is open to the same criticism as the Hecuba, and suffers from the looseness of the connexion between the earlier and the later portions. In the opening scenes deep sympathy is excited by the peril of Andromache and Molossus; but as soon as they are rescued, they disappear from the stage and are heard of no more. New interests are introduced, and the play concludes with the marriage of Orestes and the assassination of

[1] Schol. Androm. 445 *οὐ δεδίδακται Ἀθήνησιν. ὁ δὲ Καλλίμαχος ἐπιγραφῆναί φησι τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ Δημοκράτην.* Sittl (Griech. Lit. p. 336) thinks it *was* exhibited at Athens, and that Democrates was a chorus-trainer, in whose name Euripides preferred to produce it; whence the origin of the mistake. Bergk (Hermes, 18. 493 foll.) holds similar views, but identifies Democrates with the [Με]νεκράτης mentioned in Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 971 as victor in the tragic contest for 422 B.C., to which date he assigns the play.

[2] Menelaus the Spartan (733 foll.) says *ἄπειμ' ἐς οἴκους· ἔστι γάρ τις οὐ πρόσω | Σπάρτης πόλις τις, ἡ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν ἦν φίλη, | νῦν δ' ἐχθρὰ ποιεῖ τήνδ' ἐπεξελθεῖν θέλω.* This passage apparently refers to the alliance between Argos and Athens in May of 420 B.C. The violent tirades against Sparta with which the play abounds (445–463, 595–601, 724–726) confirm this view, the hostility between Athens and Sparta having reached a pitch of extreme bitterness about this time, owing to supposed violations of the Peace of Nicias in 421 (Thuc. 5. 35; Schol. Androm. 445). The versification of the dialogue (see p. 283) and the irrelevance of some of the choral odes (274 foll., 1010 foll.) are also in favour of a comparatively late date.

[3] Schol. Orest. 1654.

Neoptolemus[1]. The general tone, too, is far from pleasing[2]. Base and repulsive characters are introduced with unusual frequency[3]; and the constant exhibition of spite, jealousy, and callous brutality produces a depressing effect upon the mind, which is scarcely mitigated by certain redeeming features, such as the chivalry of Peleus, the maternal affection of Andromache, and the fidelity of the Trojan slave. Throughout the play the picture of human nature seems to have been distorted by the influence of national hatred against Sparta[4].

(9) *The Hercules Furens.*

The plot of the Hercules Furens is briefly as follows. Lycus, the tyrant of Thebes, has resolved to extirpate the family of Hercules, in order to secure himself from retribution for his misdeeds. Wherefore, taking advantage of the absence of Hercules on the last of his twelve labours, he orders his wife and children to be put to death. They fly for refuge to the altar; but their refuge failing, they are on the very point of being slaughtered, when Hercules appears, saves them from

[1] Dr. Verrall (Preface to the Student's Greek Tragedy) endeavours to strengthen the connexion between the different portions of the drama, by supposing that there is more in the plot than appears on the surface; that Menelaus is in league with Orestes from the first, and supports Hermione in her scheme of vengeance, in order to involve her in difficulties, and compel her to throw herself into the arms of Orestes. But even granting that all this may be gathered from the text of the play, it hardly relieves it of its episodic character, which is due to the disappearance of one set of characters in the middle of the action, and their replacement by another.

[2] It is described as second-rate by the author of the Argument (*τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τῶν δευτέρων*). Dr. Verrall (l. c.) denies that this phrase refers to the *merit* of the play, and supposes an allusion to some classification of which we are now ignorant. But the ordinary interpretation seems to be justified by the passage which follows—*ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ μέρει βῆσις Ἑρμιόνης τὸ βασιλικὸν οὐ φαίνουσα* (*ὑφαίνουσα* cod.), *καὶ ὁ πρὸς Ἀνδρομάχην λόγος οὐ καλῶς* (a. l. *κακῶς*) *ἔχων*—as well as by numerous parallel phrases found in the arguments of the other plays, e. g. *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τῶν θαυμαστῶν* (Arg. Oed. Col.), *τὸ μὲν δρᾶμα τῶν καλλίστων* (Arg. Ant.), *τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα τῶν πρώτων* (Arg. Hipp.), *τὸ παρὸν δρᾶμα τῶν ἄγαν ἐξαιρέτων* (Arg. Phoen.), *τὸ δρᾶμα τῶν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς εὐδοκιμούντων* (Arg. Orest.). Cp. Arguments to Acharn., Equit., Av., Ran.

[3] The displays of feminine spite and vulgarity were censured by many of the ancient critics (Schol. Androm. 32). See the previous note.

[4] See pp 229, 276.

destruction, and revenges himself on Lycus. But in the midst of the joy at his triumphant return he is smitten suddenly with madness by Hera, his implacable enemy, and slays the wife and children whom he had just rescued. On recovering consciousness he at first surrenders himself to despair. Then Theseus appears, offers him a safe asylum at Athens, and finally persuades him to abandon the thought of self-destruction, and submit with courage to his destiny.

The freedom with which, in this tragedy, Euripides has handled the customary traditions, and imparted a new moral to the legend, is remarkable. The story about Lycus appears to be an invention of his own. The introduction of Theseus, and the final retirement of Hercules to Athens, are further novelties, plainly inserted for patriotic reasons. But the most striking innovation is that connected with the madness. According to all previous tradition, the madness of Hercules, and his murder of his wife and children, preceded the twelve labours, which were generally supposed to have been inflicted as a punishment. But Euripides has transferred this calamity to the close of his life. He represents him as one who has successfully accomplished all his tasks, and vanquished his enemies both at home and abroad; but in the very moment of triumph, when he is at length about to reap the fruits of victory, his evil destiny prevails, and his happiness is for ever ruined. In this way the legend acquires a new significance, as an example of pathetic and unmerited suffering, and of stubborn endurance in the face of calamity [1].

The greatness of the play admits of no question. It has often been censured, however, for lack of unity, on the ground that the rescue of Megara and her children has no connexion with the subsequent madness of Hercules. But the objection in this case is of a formal character, without much validity. There is an inner connexion of the most tragic kind between the two parts of the play, which effectually prevents any break or cessation in the interest. Although in the earlier scenes it

[1] On the various innovations in the legend see Wilamowitz, Herakles, p. 357 foll.; Jebb's Introduction to the Trachiniae, p. 22 foll.

is the wife and children whose lives are threatened, we feel all the time that the happiness of Hercules is at stake. Our thoughts are continually directed towards him, owing to the despair caused by his absence, and the fervent prayers expressed for his return. The predominant feeling is, will he come in time? His arrival just at the critical moment, and his narrow escape from what appears to be the last of all his troubles, adds infinitely to the pathos of the subsequent disaster, in which his hopes are finally annihilated.

As to the time of composition there is very little evidence, and none of the supposed references to contemporary events are sufficiently clear to warrant any inference[1]. But certain expressions in one of the choruses appear to prove that the play was written in old age[2]; and the use of trochaic tetrameters, and the general character of the versification, are in favour of placing it between the Andromache and the Troades[3]. The year 416 may therefore be taken as an approximate date.

(10) *The Troades.*

The Troades, produced in 415, is perhaps the least interesting of the extant tragedies[4]. The plot consists merely of unconnected scenes, depicting the miserable fate of the Trojan captives; and the execution is not in the best style of Euripides. Rhetoric often takes the place of pathos, as in Cassandra's harangue, and the debate between Helen and Hecuba. The

[1] The praise of light-armed troops in ll. 188–203 is sometimes taken as a reference to the battle of Delium in 424, and the mention of the songs of the Delian maidens in l. 687 is thought to have been suggested by the restoration of Delos to the Delians in 420 (Diod. Sic. 12. 77).

[2] ll. 638–700. The picture of the sorrows of old age has a personal ring about it, as also have many of the expressions which follow, e. g. *οὐ παύσομαι τὰς χάριτας | Μούσαις συγκαταμιγνύς, | ἀδίστων συζυγίαν. | . . . ἔτι τοι γέρων ἀοιδὸς | κελαδεῖ Μναμοσύναν | . . . κύκνος ὡς γέρων ἀοιδὸς | πολιᾶν ἐκ γενύων | κελαδήσω.*

[3] See p. 283.

[4] Ael. Var. Hist. 2. 8 *κατὰ τὴν πρώτην καὶ ἐνενηκοστὴν ὀλυμπιάδα . . . δεύτερος Εὐριπίδης ἦν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ Παλαμήδει καὶ Τρῴασι καὶ Σισύφῳ σατυρικῷ.* This is confirmed by Schol. Vesp. 1317, who says that the Troades was produced seven years after the Vespae. The subject of the plot was taken from the Little Iliad (Aristot. Poet. c. 23).

choral odes, with their ornate descriptions of the capture of Troy, and their copious mythological allusions, appear lifeless and unsuitable in the mouths of women who are fresh from the scene of slaughter. But apart from particular defects, the continued recurrence of suffering and lamentation gives to the whole play a gloomy monotony which the Greek poets in general were careful to avoid.

(11) *The Electra.*

The Electra was apparently produced towards the close of the Sicilian expedition, in the spring of 413[1]. Of all the extant plays it goes the furthest in reducing the grandeur of the heroic world to an ordinary level. Electra has been given in marriage to a rustic labourer; and the play commences with a picture of cottage life, with all its humble surroundings and toilsome occupations. These preliminary scenes have attracted more criticism than any other passages in Euripides; and though the criticism has often been carried to extreme lengths, it is not altogether undeserved. Not that it is necessary to regard the domestic treatment of the legend as a fault in itself. The inferiority of the Electra lies, not so much in the general conception, as in the execution. These scenes of humble life are hardly written in the happiest vein. There is an air of unreality and affectation about them. The rustic is too conscious of his own virtues, and too profuse in maxims which recall the eloquence of the melodramatic stage. He lets us know that 'his heart is honest, though his fortunes are poor,'

[1] The words of the Dioscuri (1347 *νῶ δ' ἐπὶ πόντον Σικελὸν σπουδῇ | σώσοντε νεῶν πρῴρας ἐνάλους*) must refer to the Sicilian expedition, and to a period when the position of the Athenians, though not yet hopeless, was considerably endangered. The expedition started in the midsummer of 415, and terminated disastrously in September 413. Hence the spring of 413 is the most natural date to assign to the play.

Some confirmation of this view is supplied by ll. 1280–1284, where the myth about the phantom Helen is given in the same form in which it appears in the Helena—a play which is known to have been exhibited in 412.

The versification of the Electra, though somewhat smoother than that of the Troades (see p. 283), is not inconsistent with its lateness of date, if we make due allowance for natural variations in the poet's manner.

and that 'labour is the only road to prosperity.' He extols his own moderation in treating Electra as a virgin, and refusing to take advantage of the unequal marriage which fortune had thrown in his way[1]. Electra herself insists on fetching water from the spring when it is not required, in order to show her neighbours to what degradation she has been reduced by Aegisthus. When urged to spare herself the trouble, she talks about the duty of 'lightening her husband's toils.' The rustic, unable to stop her, consoles himself with the reflexion that it is only 'a very little distance to the well[2].' The whole proceedings have a somewhat artificial appearance, as though husband and wife knew that the eyes of the audience were upon them, and wished to create a favourable impression.

More than this, the effect of the play is impaired by a certain perversity of treatment, which causes the sympathy to be enlisted on the wrong side. Electra, during the later scenes, displays such venomous malignity of nature, that it is impossible to rejoice in her deliverance from trouble. Take, for example, her behaviour during the murder of Clytaemnestra. The plot has been carefully arranged. Orestes, axe in hand, is waiting inside the cottage, ready for the slaughter. Electra, standing at the door, receives her mother with mock humility and ironical compliments. Clytaemnestra begins to show compunction for her past crimes; and her references to the neglected condition of her daughter, and to her own remorseful feelings, are touching and natural, and excite compassion. But Electra is so far from being softened, that as her mother enters the cottage to meet her doom, she pursues her with satirical advice not to 'dirty her clothes in the smoky room,' and with horrible equivocations about the 'sacrifice' that is shortly to be performed[3]. The stern inflexibility of the Sophoclean Electra, though repugnant to modern ideas, was majestic in itself, and consistent with the general tone of the play. But in the present scene the homely and natural character of the surroundings

[1] El. 43-46, 80, 362.
[2] Ibid. 54-78.
[3] Ibid. 1102-1146. Cp. also her vindictive speech over the dead body of Aegisthus (907-956).

only brings into stronger relief the spite and treachery and inhuman jeers of the heroine.

The Electra, then, cannot be included among the more successful efforts of Euripides. Yet it is the one by which he is most often judged, owing to the facility of comparison with the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles on the same subject. But to estimate the respective merits of the three poets by these particular works is manifestly unfair to Euripides. The comparison may be interesting, in so far as it illustrates the difference in their dramatic methods, and the ingenuity with which they were able to ring the changes on the same theme. But it becomes misleading if used for other purposes. The real greatness of Euripides is to be seen, not in the Electra, but in plays like the Hippolytus and the Medea, in which the realistic treatment of the old legends is found to be not incompatible with artistic grace and dignity.

(12) *The Helena.*

The Helena, which appeared for the first time in 412, is the most fanciful in character of all the ancient tragedies[1]. The plot is a brilliant specimen of dramatic inventiveness. The notion of the phantom Helen, for which the Greeks fought at Troy, while the real Helen was detained in Egypt, has been taken partly from Stesichorus and partly from Herodotus[2]. But all the other details are added by Euripides, and combine to form an interesting and delightful story. The arrival of Menelaus in Egypt with the phantom, and the confusion caused by the simultaneous presence of phantom and reality in the same country, supply all the humorous incidents and perplexities of

[1] The date is given in Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 53, Thesm. 1021. On the general character of the composition see p. 223.

[2] The phantom Helen is not known to Homer, but appeared for the first time in Hesiod (Schol. Lycophr. 822). The story was afterwards variously developed. According to Stesichorus the real Helen never left Sparta (Dion Chrysost. Or. 11); according to Herodotus (2. 112) she ran away with Paris, but was carried by storms to Egypt, and there detained. Euripides combines the two versions, preserving the innocence of Helen, but causing her to be taken to Egypt by Hermes at the command of Zeus.

the drama; while a graver interest is imparted by the love of the Egyptian king for Helen, and his efforts to detain her, and the ingenious stratagem which procures her escape.

It would seem that about this time Euripides was peculiarly attracted by imaginative plots of this kind. The Andromeda, which was exhibited at the same festival as the Helena[1], was equally romantic in subject, with its thrilling story of the adventures of Perseus, and of his love for the maiden whom he had rescued. The two tragedies, as was natural, created a considerable sensation on account of their novelty and originality; and the Thesmophoriazusae, produced in the following year, contains a long burlesque upon them both[2]. The same vein of fancy is also seen in another work of this period, the Iphigeneia in Tauris, which has many points of resemblance to the Helena. In each of these plays the scene is laid in a remote and savage country, where a Greek lady is kept in captivity, and finally rescued by the arrival of her kinsman. In all probability this excursion into the realms of fancy was suggested by the exhaustion of the ordinary legends, which had been repeated to satiety by successive generations of tragic poets.

(13) *The Ion.*

The date of the Ion is very uncertain; but the style of the versification, and other slight indications, would seem to show that it belongs to the period immediately following the Sicilian expedition[3]. The discovery of the parentage of Ion, the son of Apollo and Creusa, forms the subject of the plot. According to common tradition Ion was not the son of Apollo, but of Xuthus,

[1] Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 1021.

[2] Thesm. 850 foll., 1010 foll.

[3] Hermann (Preface to the Ion, p. 32) thinks the play was written at a time when the question of birth and descent was uppermost, i.e. about 424, when a great many citizens were disfranchised for dubious parentage (cp. Schol. Vesp. 716). But there are several grounds for preferring a later date, viz. (1) the use of trochaic tetrameters in no less than three places, (2) the irregularity of the versification, which approximates to the style of the poet's final period, (3) the vein of hostility towards Apollo and the Delphic oracle, which suggests a date subsequent to the Sicilian expedition. On these various points see pp. 264, 283.

a stranger who had taken refuge at Athens, and married the king's daughter[1]. This was undoubtedly the original form of the legend; and the substitution of Apollo as his father, and as ancestor of the Ionians, must have been the result of national vanity. The innovation has sometimes been ascribed to Euripides, but it is more probable that the story had already begun to exist in a vague form, and that he was merely the first to invest it with precise details.

The Ion, as already pointed out, derives much of its interest from the skilful complexity of the plot, which is constructed after the modern fashion[2]. But apart from this particular excellence, it is one of the most beautifully written plays of Euripides; and the fine conception of the leading characters, and the tenderness and pathos of the various scenes, give a peculiar charm to the whole composition. It has been suggested that the chief motive of Euripides, in writing this play, was to attack the Delphic oracle; and it is true that the nature of the action gives him many opportunities for revealing his sentiments on this subject[3]. But the sanctity of the oracle is gloriously vindicated at the close; and the harmless fraud perpetrated by Apollo at the commencement of the play seems to have been contrived, not so much for the purpose of bringing the deity into disrepute, as in order to mislead the audience, and add to the surprise and excitement of the catastrophe.

(14) *The Iphigeneia in Tauris.*

The origin of the story which forms the plot of the Iphigeneia is of such a remarkable kind, that it deserves to be traced in detail, as an example, not only of the inventiveness of Euripides,

[1] Paus. 7. 1. 2.

[2] See p. 240.

[3] See Verrall's Translation of the Io (Introduction), and Euripides the Rationalist, p. 129 foll. Dr. Verrall, in accordance with his new theory (see p. 262), interprets the plot of the Ion in the following way. He considers that Euripides intends to suggest that Ion was in reality the son of the priestess and of Xuthus, and that the first revelation was a true one, as far as it went. But later on, when the uproar broke out, the priestess, to save Creusa's life, and prevent the pollution of the oracle by murder, invented the second revelation (which makes Ion the son of Apollo and Creusa); and the basket and other tokens, which are produced as evidence, were a mere fraud.

but also of the casual and fantastic nature of mythological growth. The history is as follows. Among the Greeks of the prehistoric period the offering of human sacrifices was a custom which apparently prevailed in many places, being closely associated with the worship of Artemis Tauropolus, who was also called Hecate and Iphigeneia[1]. With the advance of civilisation the practice naturally disappeared. But in some cases, instead of being entirely abolished, it was replaced by certain milder ceremonies, such as the scourging of men with whips, the sprinkling of drops of human blood, or the dedication of the clothes of women who had died in childbirth. These curious reminiscences of the old barbaric rite continued to survive in many parts of Greece, and especially at Halae and Brauron, two towns on the south-east coast of Attica[2]. At Halae, also, the ancient wooden statue of the goddess remained as an additional memorial[3].

The same custom of slaying human victims in honour of a maiden goddess was practised by the Tauri, a people of the Crimea[4]. When, therefore, the Greeks, in the course of their voyages, became acquainted with this nation, it followed almost as a matter of course, owing to the similarity of the names, that they should identify the Taurian goddess with their own Artemis Tauropolus.

So far everything is straightforward. But the peculiar part of the history commences with the introduction of Agamemnon's daughter. The identity of her name, Iphigeneia, with one of the names of the goddess, caused her to be associated in various confusing ways with this ancient form of worship. It gave rise to the post-Homeric story that she was herself offered as a sacrifice[5]. It led to the tradition that she became a priestess of Artemis at Brauron, where her tomb was shown[6]. It even caused her to be identified with the goddess. Hesiod, for

[1] Iph. Taur. 1457. Paus. 1. 43. 1, 2. 35. 1.

[2] Paus. 2. 35. 1, 3. 16. 7, 7. 26. 2. Iph. Taur. 1458–1467. Schol. Aristoph. Lysist. 645.

[3] Iph. Taur. 1453.

[4] Iph. Taur. 34–39. Herod. 4. 103.

[5] The first trace of this story is in the Cypria, one of the poems of the Epic Cycle (Proclus, Chrestom. p. 473 Gaisford).

[6] Iph. Taur. 1462–1466.

example, said that she was changed into Hecate; and the Taurians declared that the Iphigeneia to whom they sacrificed was no other person than the daughter of Agamemnon[1].

Such then was the intricate state of the tradition when Euripides began to write his tragedy. By combining and rearranging the tangled threads, and by adding fresh inventions of his own, he has not only produced a striking legend, but also provided himself with one of the finest of his plots. He supposes that the original seat of this barbarous worship was among the Tauri in the Crimea, and that Iphigeneia, after her sacrifice at Aulis, was transported thither by Artemis, and became her priestess. He introduces, with daring ingenuity, the fortunes of Orestes, and makes Apollo command, as the price of his purification, that he should sail to the land of the Taurians, gain possession of the statue of Artemis, and convey it to Attica. Orestes accordingly sets out, accompanied by Pylades. On landing at the Crimea they are captured by the inhabitants, and delivered to Iphigeneia to be slain on the altar, according to custom. Iphigeneia, who has never seen her brother since his childhood, is about to commence the sacrifice, when chance causes the relationship to be discovered. Thereupon they seize the statue, and escape together from the land[2]. Athene then appears, and bids them convey the statue to Halae in Attica, and establish the worship of Artemis Tauropolus at Halae and Brauron. But the human sacrifices are to be discontinued, and milder offerings substituted; and Iphigeneia is to become priestess at Brauron, where she will die and be buried. By this ingenious manipulation the three constituent elements of the legend—the old Greek ceremonies, the Tauric worship, and the traditions about Iphigeneia—are rescued from their previous confusion, and combined into

[1] Paus. 1. 43. 1. Herod. 4. 103. According to the Cypria (l.c.), Iphigeneia was 'made immortal among the Taurians.'

[2] All this story about the rescue of Iphigeneia, and the purification of Orestes through the statue of Artemis, appears to have been the invention of Euripides. It is not found in any author before his time; and Herodotus, when speaking of the reputed existence of Iphigeneia as a goddess among the Taurians (4. 103), makes no mention of it.

a plausible and connected story, and at the same time the odium of the primitive form of sacrifice is thrown upon the barbarians[1].

As for the date of the Iphigeneia, it should probably be assigned to the same period as the Helena[2]. The high estimation in which it was held among the ancients is proved by the frequent references of Aristotle[3]; and the modern verdict has been no less favourable. This general admiration is justified by the beauty of the play, which is a magnificent picture of devoted friendship and sisterly affection. The celebrated scene in which Iphigeneia is about to sacrifice her brother, the fatality which seems perpetually to intervene, just when they are on the very brink of mutual recognition, the long suspense, the various unexpected turns of fortune, and then at length the disclosure of the letter's contents, the revelation of the kinship, and the ecstatic joy of brother and sister, constitute one of the greatest triumphs of dramatic art.

The Iphigeneia has given rise to various imitations, of which Goethe's Iphigenie is the most famous; and it is interesting to notice, in the German play, the manner in which the incidents of the legend have been altered and modified, so as to bring them into closer harmony with modern sentiment. In Goethe's

[1] The Iphigeneia is one of the plays in which Dr. Verrall detects a rationalistic substratum underlying the apparent legend (see p. 262). His account of the plot is to this effect. Orestes, having obeyed the commands of the Delphic oracle, and slain his mother, is smitten with incurable madness. This catastrophe naturally brings the oracle into disrepute. The priestess, therefore, in order to get rid of Orestes, sends him to the Tauric land to fetch the statue of Artemis, knowing perfectly well that it is the custom of the Taurians to slaughter strangers, and fully expecting that he will never come back again. There he meets with his sister Iphigeneia, who had been conveyed to the same region, not by the intervention of Artemis, but because Odysseus and Calchas, having repented of their design to sacrifice her, had handed her over to a Tauric trading-vessel. The subsequent escape of brother and sister is the result of their cleverness and good fortune.

[2] The irregularity of the iambic metre, and the use of trochaic tetrameters, point to a late date (see p. 283). The bitterness of the attack on oracles in ll. 569–575 was probably due to the indignation caused by the result of the Sicilian expedition in 413 (see p. 264). Moreover, the fact that the Dioscuri, in their speech at the end of the Electra (1238 foll.), when describing the future destiny of Orestes, make no reference to his expedition to the Tauric land, would seem to show that the Electra was anterior to the Iphigeneia in Tauris.

[3] Poet. cc. 11, 14, 16, 17.

version of the story, Thoas, the king of the Taurians, is represented as the lover of Iphigenie, under whose gentle influence he has abandoned the atrocious customs of the country. But being unable to win her affections, he determines to avenge himself by restoring the ancient sacrifices. Orest and Pylades are taken prisoners, and condemned to be the first victims. Their identity, however, is soon discovered by Iphigenie, who joins with them in devising a plan of escape. But when the plot is ripe for execution, she is seized with compunctions unknown to the Greek heroine, and refuses to deceive the king in spite of his barbarity. Eventually, she discloses to him the whole secret, and then, by the eloquence of her appeals, persuades him to let them all depart. By these alterations the moral significance of the play is in many respects improved, and a more sentimental tone imparted to the plot, after the fashion of the modern drama. But it must be confessed that, as a work of art, the Iphigenie falls far below the Greek tragedy; and the vagueness of the action, and the dreamy discursiveness of the characters, contrast unfavourably with the precision, lucidity, and rapid movement of the original.

(15) *The Orestes.*

The Orestes, which was exhibited for the first time in 408[1], is perhaps the most unequal of all the plays of Euripides. The representation of the conscience-stricken frenzy of Orestes, with which it commences, is one of those inspired efforts, only to be matched by such creations as the sleep-walking scene in Macbeth, or the prison scene in Faust. But after this point there is a rapid deterioration, and the passionate intensity of the opening portion is followed by a long series of treacherous intrigues and ignoble stratagems, which excite no deeper interest than a feeling of curiosity as to their ultimate result[2]. The conclusion, also, is unnatural and inartistic. When affairs have reached a state of hopeless confusion, Apollo suddenly descends from heaven, and proceeds to smooth over difficulties, dispense rewards, and arrange marriages, with an abruptness

[1] Schol. Orest. 371. [2] See p. 241.

and a dangerous for previous acts which are more suitable to the termination of a comedy[1]. Helen, after figuring throughout the play as a vain and unfortunate coquette, is forthwith transformed to the [illegible] of the sky and becomes a goddess, the protectress of sailors. Orestes is commanded to marry Hermione, whose father he was in the act of cutting when Apollo appeared upon the scene. Pylades weds Electra: Menelaus is consoled for the loss of his wife by the preservation of her dowry; and everything is thus brought to a satisfactory conclusion[2].

Yet notwithstanding the inferiority of the later portion of the tragedy, it was always a favourite upon the stage; and the reason is not far to seek[3]. The first scene alone, if performed by a great actor, would be sufficient to make the fortune of any play. Moreover, the long monody of the eunuch, with its incoherent ejaculations of terror, was a novelty of an operatic kind, which would produce a far greater impression in actual representation than it produces on the mind of the reader[4]. And though the later scenes appear deficient in the loftier qualities of tragedy, they are composed with a keen eye to dramatic effect, and keep the audience in suspense to the very close of the action.

(16) *The Phoenissae.*

The Phoenissae appears to have been produced in 407[5], and deals with the same subject as the Septem of Aeschylus[6]. Like the Orestes, it is one of those plays in which the conclusion hardly fulfils the promise of the commencement. The opening

[1] Cp. Argum. Orest. τὸ δὲ δρᾶμα κωμικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν καταστρόφην.

[2] Orest. 1625–1665.

[3] Argum. Orest. τὸ δρᾶμα τῶν ἐπὶ πολὺ εὐδοκιμούντων. The comic poet Mnesimachus calls it δρᾶμα δεξιώτατον (Meineke, Frag. Com. Graec. 2, p. 763). It was reproduced at the City Dionysia in 340 B.C. (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 973). Cp. Virg. Aen. 4. 471 'aut Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes.'

[4] Orest. 1395 foll.

[5] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 53 says it was produced 'shortly before' the Frogs (405 B.C.), as compared with the Andromeda, which came out seven years before. Now it cannot have belonged to the same year as the Orestes (408), since the companion plays of the Orestes were the Oenomaus and Chrysippus (Argum. Phoen.). Hence 407 seems the most probable date. The Argument assigns it to the archonship of Nausicrates, whose name, however, is not found in the lists of this period, he being probably a 'suffectus.'

[6] See the comparison between these two plays on p. 255.

scene, in which Antigone and her attendant appear on the palace roof, watching the motions of the Argive host outside the walls, is a picturesque and effective imitation of the well-known episode in Homer[1]. Then comes the meeting between the two brothers, in the presence of Jocasta; and in this scene the tragedy reaches its highest level of dramatic power. But throughout the rest of the play, the significance of the situation is obscured by unnecessary incidents and lengthy narratives. The episode of Menoeceus has no vital connexion with the feud between the brothers; and the four speeches of the messenger, describing with elaborate detail the attack on the city, the preparations for the single combat, the combat itself, and the death of Jocasta, appear languid and undramatic in comparison with the excitement of the previous events. Finally, the aged Oedipus, who has hitherto lain concealed in the recesses of the palace, creeps forth to lament the downfall of his family; and his unexpected appearance, when all is over, adds still further to the episodic character of the play. These defects of structure were not unnoticed by the ancient critics[2]. Still the Phoenissae was much admired in antiquity on account of the excellence of the style and the beauty and variety of the sentiments[3]; and it is one of the three plays which continued to be read and studied in the latest Byzantine period.

(17) *The Bacchae.*

The Bacchae, which was not exhibited till after the death of Euripides, must have been the work of his latest years[4]; and certain local allusions favour the supposition that it was written in Macedonia at the court of Archelaus[5]. No play seems to have been more popular in the theatre, or to have been more frequently quoted and imitated[6]. Without doubt it

[1] Iliad 3. 161 foll.

[2] Argum. 4 ἥ τε ἀπὸ τῶν τειχέων Ἀντιγόνη θεωροῦσα μέρος οὐκ ἔστι δράματος, καὶ ὑπόσπονδος Πολυνείκης οὐδενὸς ἕνεκα παραγίγνεται, ὅ τε ἐπὶ πᾶσι μετ' ᾠδῆς ἀδολέσχου φυγαδευόμενος Οἰδίπους προσέρραπται διὰ κενῆς.

[3] Argum. 5 τὸ δρᾶμα τῶν ἄγαν ἐξαιρέτων, διανοίαις καὶ γνώμαις πολλαῖς καὶ καλαῖς καὶ ποικίλαις ἀνθοῦν καὶ μεταχειρίσει ἀρίστῃ, καὶ διὰ πάντων ἀεμάζον.

[4] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 67.

[5] Bacch. 408, 565.

[6] Cp. Plut. Crass. 33. Lucian Adv. Indoct. 19. Philostrat. Imag. 1. 18. Plut. Alex. 53. Verg. Aen. 4. 469. Ovid. Met. 3. 511 foll., &c.

is one of the greatest of Greek tragedies, and its production in extreme old age is a marvellous testimony to the vigour and vitality of the poet. The motive of the plot — the conflict between rationalism and religious instinct—has a deep and permanent interest. The characters, also, are contrasted with skill and discrimination. Pentheus, a foe to hypocrisy, and a sceptic as to religious belief, regarding the Bacchic rites as a mere cover for sensual indulgence or lucrative imposture, is determined to suppress them by force[1]. Opposed to him is Teiresias, a man of pious and reverent soul, to whom 'the traditions of his fathers, coeval with time itself,' are a sacred and imperishable inheritance[2]. Cadmus, the prudent old counsellor, intervenes between the two, advising caution and submission. 'Even if there be no such god as Dionysus,' it is better, he says, to 'pretend to believe,' and to practise a 'useful falsehood[3].' Amid these diversities of opinion are heard from time to time, like the burden of a song, the passionate cries and wild ecstatic prayers of the Bacchantes, as they clash their cymbals in fervid adoration, and protest their scorn for 'the wisdom of deep thinkers,' and their devotion to the 'customs and beliefs of the multitude[4].'

This fierce antagonism between conflicting principles is intensely dramatic in itself, and leads to a conclusion which, for depth of tragic irony, has no equal in Euripides. Dionysus, appearing in the shape of a comely youth, conceals his vindictive purpose under a mask of smooth and winning innocence. Pentheus, following blindly his treacherous guidance, is drawn along from one delusion to another, until the climax is reached when he comes upon the stage, half dazed in mind, and dressed like a Bacchante, with girdle and wand and flowing robe. In this humiliating posture he is exhibited for a time to the public gaze, unconscious of his companion's mockery, and feebly smiling at his own astuteness, and the cleverness of his disguise. Then after carefully arranging the details of his

[1] Bacch. 225, 257.
[2] Ibid. 201-203.
[3] Ibid. 330 foll.
[4] Ibid. 370 foll., 862 foll., 977 foll.

female attire, he departs, full of confidence and gratitude, on his fatal enterprise[1].

The moral of the play is to demonstrate the power of the gods, and the futility of resistance to the universal convictions of mankind. The conclusion is enforced with so much passion and vehemence, that the Bacchae has often been regarded as a sort of recantation on the part of Euripides. It has been suggested that he wished, in his old age, to reconcile himself to his countrymen, and to atone for his previous attacks on their religious beliefs. But it is perhaps hardly necessary to assume any such purpose in the composition of the tragedy, especially as it appears to have been written after his final departure from Athens. It is doubtful, too, whether his religious views had given much offence to the majority of his countrymen, or were felt to require any formal recantation. Occasional strokes of satire, directed against the grosser features of the legends, had been more than outweighed by the general tendency of his plays, which was not unfavourable to the established creed. If this tendency is more than usually prominent in the Bacchae, the fact is largely due to the character of the legend. The story of Pentheus, if treated at all, could hardly be treated in any other way than that adopted by Euripides. It would have been impossible on the Attic stage, and at the festival of Dionysus, to represent Pentheus as an innocent victim, and the Dionysiac worship as a fraud. Euripides has taken the myth as he found it, and his dramatic instinct has caused him to depict the fervid enthusiasm of the Bacchantes with extraordinary force and power. But to suppose that he wished their violent utterances, and their contempt for philosophy and speculation, to be regarded as his own last words upon the subject, is to forget the dramatic nature of his work. Even in the present play he does not shrink from exposing the imperfections of the legend. Agave, in the final scene, protesting against the excessive severity of Dionysus, admonishes him that gods should be superior to men, and should not imitate their craving for vengeance. To her dignified rebuke Dionysus

[1] Bacch. 912–976.

can find no better answer than that his conduct has been 'sanctioned by Zeus[1].' This characteristic allusion to the frailties and vices of the legendary deities would scarcely have been inserted in a play which was written as a recantation of previous attacks, and as a glorification of the old mythology.

(18) *The Iphigeneia in Aulide.*

The Iphigeneia in Aulide, which, like the Bacchae, was not exhibited till after its author's death, bears evident traces of interpolation. In all probability it was the latest of the poet's works, and being left in an unfinished condition, was completed and prepared for representation by the younger Euripides, in whose name it was first produced[2]. To trace in detail all the later insertions is a difficult task, which has given rise to the utmost diversity of opinion. But there are certain passages about which most editors are agreed. The dull and lengthy descriptions of the first chorus, and the messenger's confused account of Clytaemnestra's arrival, may be regarded with a fair amount of certainty as the work of the adapter[3]. The commencement of the play is also very unusual. It opens with a vivacious dialogue in anapaests between Agamemnon and his attendant. But in the middle of this dialogue is inserted, in the clumsiest fashion, a long and formal narrative, composed in the iambic metre, and in the usual style of the Euripidean prologue. The obvious inference appears to be that portions of two alternative openings have somehow been combined; but how this came about, and whether either or both were composed by Euripides, is a matter of pure conjecture.

In addition to the insertions of the adapter, the play in later times underwent still further alterations. In its original form it concluded with the appearance of the 'deus ex machina.' After Iphigeneia had been led away to sacrifice, Artemis descended from heaven, and consoled the weeping Clytaemnestra by informing her of the substitution of the deer, and the future

[1] Bacch. 1344-1349. [2] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 67.
[3] Iph. Aul. 164-302, 414-439.

immortality of her daughter[1]. This termination seems to have disappeared at some later epoch, and to have been replaced by the present scene, in which the details of the sacrifice are related by the messenger. The concluding part of the substituted scene was itself lost in course of time, and its place is now taken by the barbarous composition of some mediaeval grammarian[2]. Hence the last fifty lines of the play, as they now appear, represent the second variation from the original conclusion.

In spite of its imperfect condition, the tragedy is a work of great beauty and interest. It is true that in some places it exhibits the defects of the poet's later manner. The choruses have little immediate bearing on the course of the action; Clytaemnestra's appeal to Agamemnon is somewhat forensic in tone; and Achilles occasionally shows a disposition to lecture on moral science[3]. Moreover, the trochaic tetrameter is employed with far greater frequency than in any other drama; and though it is an admirable metre for violent altercations, such as that between Agamemnon and Menelaus, it is hardly so effective as the iambic in the more dignified and pathetic portions of the dialogue[4]. But these occasional deficiencies are balanced by conspicuous merits. The irresolute character of Agamemnon, his hesitation between the calls of love and policy, and his peevish discontent at the ill-success of his frauds, are drawn with peculiar mastery; and the confusion with which he receives the affectionate greetings of the daughter whom he is deceiving gives occasion to a scene of great tenderness and passion. Equally effective is the meeting of Clytaemnestra with Achilles, and the extreme astonishment of the one on being greeted as a son-in-law, and the embarrassment of the other on finding that the supposed marriage is a fiction. The sudden change of mood in Iphigeneia, from terrified despair to heroic self-devotion, when she finds that the fate of all Greece

[1] This inference appears to be justified by Aelian, Hist. An. 7. 39 ὁ δὲ Εὐριπίδης ἐν τῇ Ἰφιγενείᾳ· ἔλαφον δ' Ἀχαιῶν χερσὶν ἐνθήσω φίλαις | κεροῦσσαν, ἣν σφάζοντες αὐχήσουσι σὴν | σφάζειν θυγατέρα.

[2] Iph. Aul. 1577–1629.

[3] Ibid. 1146 foll., 919 foll.

[4] Ibid. 317–401, 855–916, 1338–1401.

depends upon herself, has been censured as an inconsistency by Aristotle[1]. But though the transition might perhaps have been made less abrupt, it is difficult to see why it should be regarded as unnatural.

The sacrifice of Iphigeneia was a favourite subject with ancient artists. Of all the numerous representations of the event, the most celebrated was that of Timanthes of Sicyon, a painter who flourished at the end of the fifth century, and whose picture represented Agamemnon as covering his face with his mantle, while the knife was raised to slay his daughter. The old critics were profuse in their admiration of the artist's skill and delicacy, in adopting this method of depicting a father's agony[2]. The question has often been raised whether the idea was originally due to Timanthes himself, or whether it was taken from the present tragedy, in which the description of the sacrifice corresponds with the representation in the picture. But if, as seems almost certain, the conclusion of the play was a later addition, the question of priority is at once settled. Possibly, however, the attitude of Agamemnon during the death of his daughter formed part of the old tradition on the subject, and was merely adopted, and not invented, by Timanthes.

(19) *The Cyclops.*

The Cyclops has been placed at the end of the present list, since it is impossible to determine even approximately the date of its composition. It contains no trace of any allusion to contemporary events, nor is it ever parodied by Aristophanes. The versification cannot be used as a criterion, owing to the peculiar character of the satyric metre, which differed in many respects from that of tragedy. The graceful finish of the language might suggest that it belonged to the same period as the Alcestis and the Hippolytus; but impressions of this kind are not very reliable, unless supported by other evidence.

The play, apart from its intrinsic merits, possesses an extra-

[1] Poet. c. 15 *τοῦ δὲ ἀνωμάλου (παράδειγμα) ἡ ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένεια· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ ἱκετεύουσα τῇ ὑστέρᾳ.*

[2] E.g. Cic. Orator, c. 22. Quint. Inst. Orat. 2. 13. 13.

ordinary interest for modern readers, as the sole remaining specimen of the satyric drama. It brings us into living contact with ancient customs and with modes of religious worship which have long since passed away. We seem, for the moment, to catch the real spirit of the old Dionysiac worship, with its mixture of fancy, and passion, and riotous indecency. The story is taken directly from Homer's Odyssey, the only innovation being the presence of Silenus and the satyrs. Odysseus is represented, after the Homeric fashion, as a brave and adventurous warrior, pious towards the gods, resourceful in danger, and staunch and faithful towards his companions. The gross and brutal Polyphemus, the drunken Silenus, and the cowardly and licentious satyrs, complete the picture. These discordant elements are combined with rare skill into a work of harmonious beauty. Odysseus, in the midst of his uncouth surroundings, conducts himself with easy yet dignified familiarity, neither descending to buffoonery, nor assuming a tragic solemnity. The tone of the play changes gracefully and rapidly from one mood to another, from humorous pictures of shameless treachery and drunken indecency, to earnest appeals and poetical descriptions. Throughout the whole there runs a breezy air of country life, and a suggestion of an idyllic existence passed in seclusion amid the flocks and herds, in a land of shady thickets, cool streams, and grassy slopes. The play has no exact parallel in modern literature. The combination of lively and serious incident recalls, it is true, the mixed character of the Elizabethan drama; and the vein of idyllic fancy has much in common with the pastoral plays of the Italians, and the romantic comedies of Shakespeare. But the extravagant licence of the satyrs is a unique and peculiar feature which differentiates the Cyclops from all other existing dramas, and places it in a class by itself as a solitary relic of remote antiquity.

§ 10. *Reputation in Ancient Times.*

We have seen that the popularity enjoyed by Euripides during the greater part of his own lifetime was of a chequered character,

and that, though idolised by the younger generation, he was disliked and distrusted by many of the older Athenians[1]. But before the close of the fifth century his fame had come to be firmly established, not only in Athens, but throughout the whole of Greece. The veneration which he now began to inspire is proved by a remarkable anecdote in Plutarch, who tells us that many Athenians, after the final battles in Sicily, while wandering in flight over the island, procured food and drink from the common people by singing lyrics of Euripides; and that many others, who had been captured and sold as slaves, obtained their liberty by teaching their masters portions of Euripides with which they were previously unacquainted[2].

In the fourth century he soon became the most popular of the tragic poets. His plays were demanded with increasing frequency by theatrical audiences[3], and his enormous influence over the national mind is proved by the evidence of poets, orators, and philosophers. Plato and Aristotle quote him more repeatedly than any other tragic writer; and Plato, ironically referring to the supposed wisdom of tragedy, admits that the reputation of Euripides is pre-eminent[4]. Orators, such as Aeschines and Lycurgus, extol his sagacity and his patriotism[5]. The comic poets, unlike their brethren of the fifth century, were so fervent in their admiration, that Philemon declared that if he had been sure of the existence of a future state, he would have hung himself in order to see Euripides[6]. No poet was more continuously in men's mouths. Alexander the Great habitually quoted maxims from his plays, and in the banquet which preceded his death recited from memory a whole scene out of the Andromeda[7]. The prevailing enthusiasm was satirised by Axionicus, in a comedy called the Lover of Euripides, in which people were represented as suffering from the disease to such

[1] See pp. 122, 220, 226.

[2] Plut. Nicias, c. 29.

[3] See Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 973, which shows that the old tragedies produced at the City Dionysia in three successive years (341-339 B.C.) were all by Euripides.

[4] Plat. Rep. 568 A.

[5] Aesch. Timarch. § 153. Lycurg. Leocr. § 100.

[6] Vita Eur. p. 7 Dindf.

[7] Plut. Alexander, c. 53. Athen. p. 537.

an alarming extent, that they regarded all poetry except that of Euripides as mere foolishness[1].

But the admiration of critical readers was less unqualified. Aristotle, in the Poetics, while admitting that he was the 'most tragic' of the poets[2], and while commending the skilful intricacy of some of his plots[3], finds much that deserves censure in his general management of a play. Idealism, in the opinion of Aristotle, was an essential attribute of tragedy; hence the realistic colouring of Euripides, and his faithful reproduction of the vices of mankind, meets with strong disapprobation[4]. The irrelevancy of some of the later choruses is also justly regarded as a mark of deterioration[5]; and the occasional use of the 'deus ex machina,' not for its legitimate purpose of conveying necessary information to the audience, but as an easy solution of the plot, is likewise condemned[6].

During the succeeding centuries the grammarians and professional critics, such as Aristophanes and Didymus, seem to have followed on the whole the traditions of Aristotle. In the course of various criticisms, which are to be found in the arguments and annotations attached to the plays, they censure Euripides for the realism and inconsistency of his characters, the irrelevancy of his choruses, and the occasional vulgarity and redundancy of his dialogue[7]. But in spite of these objections the popular enthusiasm for his poetry tended rather to increase than to diminish thoughout the remaining period of Greek history. The frequency with which he was read and quoted may be inferred from the number of the existing

[1] Athen. p. 175.

[2] In Poet. c. 4 he remarks that it is a mistake to censure Euripides because many of his tragedies end unhappily. Such plays, if successful, are the 'most tragic' of all, *καὶ ὁ Εὐριπίδης, εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μὴ εὖ οἰκονομεῖ, ἀλλὰ τραγικωτατός γε τῶν ποιητῶν φαίνεται.*

[3] The Cresphontes and the Iphigeneia in Tauris are specially praised for their skilful structure, ibid. cc. 14, 16, 17. In c. 25, however, the episodic introduction of Aegeus in the Medea is censured.

[4] Ibid. cc. 15 and 25, where Menelaus in the Orestes is twice cited as an example of a character unnecessarily vile. Cp. c. 15, where Iphigeneia in the Iph. Aul. is described as inconsistent, and Melanippe in the Melanippe Sophe as too philosophical.

[5] Ibid. c. 18.

[6] Ibid. c. 15.

[7] Vita Eur. p. 10. Argum. Orest., Androm., Med. Schol. Androm. 379. Schol. Aristoph. Acharn. 443.

fragments, which far exceed those of Aeschylus and Sophocles. The continued popularity of his dramas upon the stage is attested by numerous references, even in writers of a late epoch[1]. Actors of pantomime took their subjects from his tragedies[2]; vase-painters, when depicting theatrical scenes, preferred his plays to those of any other tragic writer[3]; and schoolmasters, in arranging the course of studies for their pupils, selected him as the representative of tragic poetry[4]. The enthusiasm which he inspired continued to supply subjects of satire to the New Comedy[5]. It was also frequently ridiculed, at a later epoch, by Lucian, who makes the gods themselves discourse together in verses of Euripides, and who cites, as a further example of the universal fashion, a surprising story about the inhabitants of Abdera. These people, he tells us, during a certain hot summer, were so deeply affected by a performance of the Andromeda, that they caught a sort of tragic fever, which began with bleeding and perspiration, but was succeeded in about a week's time by an incontrollable impulse to recite. The consequence was that they went about the streets, day and night, repeating passages of Euripides, and especially the love passages, until at length they were cured by the return of the cold weather[6].

The diversity of opinion between the critics and the general public concerning the merits of Euripides is clearly indicated in one of the orations of Dion Chrysostomus, in which, after recommending his dramas to the student of rhetoric, he begs the 'more cultivated readers' not to assume that he prefers him to the older tragic poets. He adds that the 'softness and persuasiveness of Euripides fail perhaps to attain the full dignity

[1] Plut. de Esu Carn. c. 5, de Sera Num. Vind. c. 11. Philostrat. vit. Apoll. 5. 7, 7. 3; Imag. 2. 23. Dion Chrysost. Or. 10. Lucian, de Salt. 27, Somnium 25, Necyom. 16. Athen. p. 343. Polyaenus I. proem. § 12. Dion Cass. 63. 9, 22. Maximus Tyrius 7, p. 126. Synesius de Provid. p. 106 A.

[2] Corp. Ins. Lat. 5. 2. 5889, where the Ion and Troades are mentioned as subjects of pantomime.

[3] Vogel, Scenen Euripideischer Tragödien in griechischen Vasengemälden, Leipzig, 1886.

[4] According to Dionysius Thrax (quoted in Sextus Empiricus, Math. 1. 58), the poets interpreted by the γραμματικοί (schoolmasters) were Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Euripides, and Menander.

[5] Thus Philippides wrote a Φιλευριπίδης (Meineke, vol. 4, p. 473).

[6] Lucian, Iuppiter Tragoedus, 1; Historia Quomodo Conscribenda, 1.

and sublimity of tragedy,' but that the rhetorical eloquence and sententious wisdom of his plays are exceedingly useful to the man who is preparing for public life[1]. These two qualities were no doubt to a large extent the cause of the wide-spread popularity of Euripides in later times. But after all the real secret of his power was his sympathy with human nature. It was the passion and tenderness of his dramas, and not the rhetoric and the philosophy, which caused Crantor, the Platonist, to rank him along with Homer as the greatest of all poets, and which filled Chrysippus with such admiration for his Medea, that he quoted nearly the whole of it in the course of his works[2].

No poet ever exercised a more powerful influence over subsequent literature. Even during his lifetime he was imitated by a numerous band of youthful writers[3]. After his death the tragic authors of the fourth century adopted his dramatic methods, and endeavoured to copy the simplicity of his style[4]. The later comedy also used him as a model. Menander, whose fragments are full of reminiscences of his poetry, repeatedly admitted his obligations[5]; and Eubulus and Diphilus appear to have been no less enthusiastic in their admiration[6]. Among the Romans the earliest attempts at tragedy were based mainly on Euripides[7], while epic and elegiac poets, such as Virgil, Ovid, and Lucretius, drew much of their inspiration from the same source. The man who could produce such lasting effects, and could retain his hold upon the mind of antiquity for nearly a thousand years, must have possessed gifts of extraordinary greatness; and the modern scholars who style him a 'second-rate poet' might have felt that the mere fact of his unceasing popularity was enough to throw suspicion on their criticisms.

[1] Dion Chrysost. Or. 18. Cp. Quint. Inst. Or. 10. 1. 68.

[2] Diog. Laert. 4. 26, 7. 180.

[3] Aristoph. Ran. 99.

[4] See p. 257.

[5] Quint. Inst. Or. 10. 1. 69. For instances see Meineke, Com. Graec. Frag. 4. p. 705.

[6] Diphilus called him ὁ κατάχρυσος Εὐριπίδης (Athen. p. 422); and Eubulus frequently copied his verses (e. g. Athen. pp. 63, 108, 569).

[7] Anon. de tragoedia (in Rhein. Museum, 28. p. 419), 'tragoedias autem Ennius fere omnes ex Graecis transtulit, plurimas ex Euripideis.'

CHAPTER V.

FORM AND CHARACTER OF GREEK TRAGEDY.

§ 1. *General Characteristics.*

WITH the rise of Attic tragedy the poetry of the Greeks may be said to have reached its culminating point, and to have completed the natural process of its evolution. Before this period the two great branches of poetical composition which had mainly absorbed the energies of Greece had been the epic and the lyric; but of these the former had now well-nigh run its course, while the latter was already beginning to exhibit the symptoms of decline. A more advanced civilisation demanded a novel form of utterance. It was at this epoch that tragedy came into existence, and by borrowing from each of the older species many of their most striking qualities, produced out of the combination of these diverse elements a new and complex creation which satisfied the varied requirements of the age. From the epic it derived its legendary subjects, and its graceful and majestic picture of the heroic world. From lyric poetry it inherited a wealth of metrical forms, and a splendour of diction, which were capable of reflecting every shade of feeling and passion. But in spite of this indebtedness to what had gone before it, the tragedy of the Greeks was far from being a mere coalescence of existing types. The materials borrowed from the ancient poetry, in passing through the process of fusion and reconstruction, were transformed in character, and assumed a more brilliant and impressive shape. The serene and leisurely narrative of the epic was intensified into an action, rapid and concise, and transacted before the very eyes of the audience.

The narrow and personal interests of the old lyric poetry were exchanged for meditations of deeper moment, concerning the great principles and eternal problems of the universe. The result was a species of art which far surpassed all previous productions in vividness of effect, and in profound earnestness of moral feeling.

This latter characteristic—this ethical elevation of tone and purpose—is perhaps the most salient feature in the ancient drama, and it is one which was fostered by the circumstances of the time. We have seen that when tragedy first rose into prominence, the old traditional acquiescence in established beliefs had been succeeded, among the higher classes, by a spirit of restless inquiry, and by ardent aspirations after a new and more enlightened creed. But as philosophy had not as yet begun to assert her claims, or to exercise her attractions, the deeper feelings and speculations of the period found their natural outlet in the tragic drama. Hence the tone of this drama is essentially meditative and religious. Whatever the subjects or the issues of which it treats, a vein of profound and earnest thoughtfulness runs through every part of the composition. Beneath all the movement and turmoil of the action there is present continually the same pervading sense of the dark mystery of existence, and the same wistful craving for knowledge concerning the ways of providence and the destiny of mankind. But this reflective and philosophic spirit, though diffused over every scene, is in no way inconsistent with the poetic vitality of the drama. It never leads to dry disquisitions, or to cold and formal dogmatism. The utterances of the old tragic poets on the subject of fate, and necessity, and divine justice, are like the visions of the inspired prophet rather than the teachings of the systematic thinker; and the mysterious solemnity of tone which they impart to the productions of Attic tragedy heightens, instead of weakening, the dramatic effect. The modern theatre has seldom risen to the same level of impressiveness. The religious dramas of Calderon, with all their devotional enthusiasm, are far inferior in depth and meaning; while in plays like Goethe's Faust the progress of the action is paralysed by

excess of thought and reflexion. Indeed, it is only in the greatest tragedies of Shakespeare, such as Hamlet and Macbeth, that we meet with anything like an equal combination of dramatic power and profound moral significance.

The ethical grandeur of the antique tragedy is accompanied, on the aesthetic side, by a graceful harmony of form and structure which has never been surpassed. Beauty, no less than truth and impressiveness, was the constant aim of the ancient tragic writers; and the influence of this artistic feeling is to be seen in every part of their work—in the choice of subjects, as well as in the mode of treatment. The object of the whole design is to raise the representation out of the common level into a region of ideal splendour. The plots are all taken from those sacred legends which long tradition had invested with a romantic charm. The characters are princely heroes, surpassing in strength and vigour the race of mortal men. The speeches are composed in noble and poetic language, and in verse of sonorous and measured cadence. The scene is laid in the open daylight, before some stately palace or temple of the gods. The manner, too, in which the events were exhibited on the stage—the dignified bearing of the actors, their graceful movements, gorgeous dresses, and masks stamped with strong heroic features—affords an additional proof of the lofty and exalted idealism of the entire performance.

Another distinctive quality of Greek tragedy, and one which is seldom absent from any product of Attic genius, is the simplicity and lucid clearness of the general conception. Everything which might tend to confuse the mind, or to divert it from the main object of interest, is carefully excluded. The action is brief and straightforward, and concentrated generally on a single point. The characters are few in number, none being introduced beyond those who are essential to the working of the plot, and only three being allowed to appear on the stage at the same time[1]. In fact, there is nothing which shows more

[1] Even those three were seldom allowed to converse together promiscuously. As a rule, while two of them engaged in speech, the third stood by in silence. See the Attic Theatre, p. 202.

clearly the diversity between ancient and modern taste than a comparison between this severe and lucid form of drama, and the plays of the romantic type, with their crowds of unimportant characters, their promiscuous conversations, and the bustling animation of their scenes. Yet any approach to bareness and poverty of effect was prevented, in the Attic theatre, by the presence of the chorus in the orchestra. The chorus, by their varied movements and evolutions in the foreground of the scene, afforded the same relief to the mind, and the same pleasure to the eye, as that which is derived from the picturesque groupings of the modern stage. At the same time, being separated from the actors, and standing on a lower level, they ran no risk of intruding unduly on the scene of action, or of distracting the attention of the audience from the figures of the leading characters.

The artistic taste and discrimination of the Greeks is further exemplified in their treatment of those deeds of physical horror and atrocity which form the catastrophe of most tragedies. Such deeds may either be exhibited before the eyes of the spectators, or enacted behind the scenes, and revealed subsequently by narrative. In their practice as regards this particular question the Greeks seem to have hit the happy mean between two possible extremes, avoiding with equal care the faults of indiscriminate realism and excessive delicacy. They show none of that sensitive aversion to the display of bodily suffering which is characteristic of the French classical school. Spectacles of a painful, and even of a ghastly nature, are by no means infrequent in their dramas. Oedipus with his blood-stained eye-balls, Agave carrying the head of her slaughtered son, the tortures endured by Philoctetes, and the dying agonies of Hercules and Hippolytus, are sufficient evidence to the contrary[1]. But scenes of active violence and brutal outrage, such as the Elizabethan dramatists delighted to exhibit, are rarely admitted, and in the whole of the extant Greek tragedies there are only two examples of a sudden death upon the

[1] Soph. Oed. Tyr. 1327, Phil. 730–755, Trach. 783 foll., Eur. Bacch. 1278–1285, Hipp. 1348 foll.

stage[1]. In all other cases horrors of this kind are accomplished out of sight. Yet even then, when the act has once been perpetrated, the results are often displayed on the eccyclema in the form of an imposing tableau.

This exclusion of bodily violence from the classical stage has been variously accounted for, some writers ascribing it to necessity, and supposing that the dress of the Athenian actors was too heavy and cumbersome to admit of the visible representation of such scenes. But the unwieldiness of the old tragic costume appears to have been much exaggerated by modern critics. The actors, as we may gather from the existing plays, could run across the stage, kneel in supplication, and even fling themselves upon the ground[2]; and there was nothing in their dress to prevent them from engaging in a conflict, or committing a murder. Nor is the reason to be found in the fear that such episodes, when imitated in the theatre, might seem absurd and incredible, and excite laughter rather than terror[3]. The Greek poets, like all dramatists of an early epoch, were not much influenced by these considerations; and many of their devices, such as the 'deus ex machina,' and the eccyclema, were of a kind which might easily be turned into ridicule, as is shown by the parodies of Aristophanes. The real reason was that refinement of sentiment, which regarded the actual commission of such atrocities as a sight too terrible for the feelings of the audience. The Greeks, it is true, could tolerate the appearance of the blinded Oedipus, when the deed had once been accomplished; but if they

[1] That of Ajax in Soph. Aj. 865, and of Evadne in Eur. Suppl. 1070.

[2] Instances of actors hurrying across the stage are to be found in Soph. El. 871, Antig. 766; Eur. Hel. 543. Examples of kneeling are very frequent, e.g. Eur. Androm. 529, 717, 892, Orest. 382, Hec. 339, 752, El. 221. Sometimes the actors fall flat upon the ground, as in Soph. Phil. 819; Eur. Troad. 462, 1305, Heracleid. 75. Cp. also Soph. Aj. 865 (where Ajax falls upon his sword), Eur. Suppl. 1070 (where Evadne hurls herself down from the tower on to the funeral pyre), Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 228 (whence it appears that in the Plyntriae of Sophocles Nausicaa was represented as playing at ball).

[3] Such appears to have been Horace's view. Cp. Ars Poet. 182–188 'non tamen intus | digna geri promes in scenam, multaque tolles | ex oculis quae mox narret facundia praesens. | Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet, | aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus, | aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem. | Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic incredulus odi.'

had seen him actually plunging the brooch-pin into his eyes, the spectacle would have excited, not pity, but physical repulsion.

The decorous reserve maintained by the Greeks in regard to the concrete representation of the painful and the horrible is in strict accordance with the general tenor of their drama, in which spectacular effect, though regarded as a valuable adjunct, was never allowed to acquire undue prominence. The object of the early poets was to arrest the attention of the audience by the spiritual, rather than by the physical aspect of the legend represented; and their tragedies were composed throughout in consonance with this feeling. The story was unfolded, not so much by visible deeds and outward shows, as by the speeches and conversations of the different characters. The debates and discussions which preceded and determined the course of events were regarded as of more importance and interest than the realistic exhibition of the events themselves. Hence in the texture of the ancient tragedy speech predominates over action. The dialogue, with its long harangues and formal disputations, resembles, in structural character, the dialogues of Corneille rather than those of Shakespeare. Still, in spite of the prevalence of mere debate and declamation, it would be a mistake to suppose that, in actual performance, the ancient tragedy was in any danger of suffering from that frigid uniformity and lack of colour which are the bane of the modern classical dramas. Monotony of impression, on the Greek stage, was effectually prevented by infinite variety and flexibility in the means and methods of representation. The tragedy of the Greeks was like a finely-strung instrument, responding with sensitive delicacy to every wave of feeling. The even flow of the dialogue was relieved and diversified by the constant interposition of lyrical passages and choral odes. The successive fluctuations in the tone of the drama were accompanied by subtle and expressive changes in the metrical form, of which the significance was enhanced by the accurate intonation of the ancient actors. The mode of enunciation was continually rising into chant and song, or falling back again into ordinary speech, as the situation required. The progress of the action

was interpreted and emphasised by the gestures, movements, and sympathetic utterances of the chorus. The result was a harmonious fusion of the various arts of poetry, music, and dancing, to which there is no parallel in modern theatres. The opera, with its exaltation of the sensuous over the spiritual, and its subordination of the poetry to the music, is of little use as an object of comparison. Nor can it be expected that modern reproductions of Greek plays, should give an adequate conception of the beauty of the original. The delicate distinctions of metre, the varied modulation of the music, and, above all, the vivid suggestiveness of the choral dances, can only be represented, on the modern stage, in a rude and unsatisfactory manner.

Such then were the general characteristics of Greek tragedy. It assumed, as was natural, a somewhat different aspect in the hands of the three great poets. In Aeschylus the grandeur and religious depth of the conception were more conspicuous than the perfection of the artistic form. In Euripides the moral impressiveness and ideal beauty of the older drama began to give place to a more secular tone, and a more realistic manner of treatment. The plots, also, became more complex, and the music, as in modern opera, began to encroach upon the sense and the poetry. It was only in Sophocles that the various elements of classical tragedy—religious inspiration, simplicity of structure, and ideal beauty in form and subject—were blended together into creations of consummate grace and harmony. Hence Sophocles, though excelled in some respects by both Aeschylus and Euripides, has justly been regarded as the typical representative of Greek tragedy in its highest perfection.

§ 2. *The Subjects.*

The rule which restricted Greek tragedy to mythological subjects was seldom disregarded at any period of its history, and during the whole of the fifth century only four exceptions are recorded[1]. The continued observance of the old limitation

[1] Viz. the Φοίνισσαι and Μιλήτου Ἅλωσις of Phrynichus (see p. 43, note 5), the Πέρσαι of Aeschylus, and the Ἄνθος of Agathon (see p. 410).

appears to have been due, partly to religious conservatism, partly to the idealising instincts of the Greeks. But it is interesting to notice that Aristotle, in approving the choice of legendary themes, defends them, not on the ground of their beauty and impressiveness, but of their credibility. He considers that the strange incidents of tragedy, if invented by the poets, would have appeared impossible; but as they formed part of the traditional history of ancient times, they were accepted by the audience without demur[1]. His remarks on this subject are a striking testimony to the hold which the legends still retained over the minds of the common people.

Owing to this restriction to a single round of fables, it was inevitable that there should be constant repetitions, and that the same stories should be dramatised over and over again by successive poets[2]. Such coincidence in subject was not, however, usually regarded as a plagiarism; if the incidents were treated with a certain degree of freshness, the tragedy, though dealing with the old materials, passed muster as new and original work[3]. Many examples have already been given, in the notices of the extant dramas, of this ingenious reconstruction of existing plots[4]; but we may cite a further instance from the three plays which deal with the return of

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 9 ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς τραγῳδίας τῶν γενομένων ὀνομάτων ἀντέχονται. αἴτιον δ' ὅτι πιθανόν ἐστι τὸ δυνατόν. τὰ μὲν οὖν μὴ γενόμενα οὔπω πιστεύομεν εἶναι δυνατά, τὰ δὲ γενόμενα φανερὸν ὅτι δυνατά· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐγένετο εἰ ἦν ἀδύνατα.

[2] The following is a list of the plots which were handled by more than one of the three great dramatists. (1) Subjects treated by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—Ἠλέκτρα and Χοηφόροι, Ἰξίων, Ἰφιγένεια, Οἰδίπους, Παλαμήδης, Τήλεφος, Φιλοκτήτης. (2) By Aeschylus and Sophocles—Ἀθάμας, Ἐπίγονοι, Θρῆσσαι and Αἴας, Μέμνων, Μυσοί, Νιόβη, Φινεύς, Φρύγες. (3) By Aeschylus and Euripides—Ἀλκμήνη, Βακχαί, Ἐλευσίνιοι and Ἱκέτιδες, Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας and Φοίνισσαι, Εὐμενίδες and Ὀρέστης, Ἡρακλεῖδαι, Κρῆσσαι, Σίσυφος, Ὑψιπύλη. (4) By Sophocles and Euripides—Αἰγεύς, Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἀνδρομάχη, Ἀλκμέων, Ἀνδρομέδα, Ἀντιγόνη, Δανάη, Θησεύς, Θυέστης, Ἰνώ, Ἴων, Μελέαγρος, Οἰνεύς, Οἰνόμαος, Πηλεύς, Πολύιδος, Ῥιζοτόμοι and Πελιάδες, Σκύριοι, Φαίδρα and Ἱππόλυτος, Φρίξος, Φοῖνιξ.

[3] Aristot. Poet. c. 18 δίκαιον δὲ καὶ τραγῳδίαν ἄλλην καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν λέγειν οὐδὲν ἴσως τῷ μύθῳ. τοῦτο δέ, ἂν ᾖ αὐτὴ πλοκὴ καὶ λύσις.

[4] See the remarks on Sophocles' Electra (p. 146), and Philoctetes (p. 196); and on Euripides' Oedipus (p. 194), Antigone (p. 183), Electra (p. 301), Alcestis (p. 288), and Phoenissae (p. 255).

Orestes. In these plays one of the most interesting episodes is the recognition scene between Orestes and Electra; and it is instructive to observe the different colouring which is given to the situation by each of the three poets. In Aeschylus the proceedings are simple and straightforward. Orestes, on reaching Argos, and finding his sister alone with her maidens before the palace gates, comes forward at once, and makes himself known without hesitation. In Sophocles the same episode is developed to much greater length, and converted into a moving picture of tenderness and passion. The servant of Orestes first appears, disguised as a stranger, and bringing a fictitious report of his master's death, which he proceeds to describe in a long and thrilling narrative. Then, after an intermediate scene, Orestes himself arrives, also in disguise, and carrying the urn which is supposed to contain his own ashes. Electra, taking the urn in her hands, gives utterance to the agony of her feelings in a speech of such passionate intensity, that her brother can no longer endure the sight of her sufferings, and, after a brief struggle for self-mastery, is compelled to reveal his identity before he had intended. In Euripides a further variety is introduced. Orestes again approaches Electra in the guise of a stranger, but this time with the report that her brother is still alive. He then retires into the cottage; and during his temporary absence an old retainer of the family arrives, by whom, when he comes forth again, he is at once recognised.

By skilful variations of this kind the Attic poets succeeded for a long time in disguising the monotony of their subjects; and to a critical spectator it must have been an extra source of pleasure, when an old legend was reproduced, to trace the different deviations from tradition. It was impossible, however, that the process should be prolonged indefinitely; and we shall see later on that this unceasing iteration of the old themes was one of the main causes of the decline of the tragic drama. But in the age of the great dramatists the evil effects of the restriction were not as a rule very noticeable. The fertility of the legends was still far from being exhausted. Occasionally,

perhaps, the necessities of the case might lead to capricious innovations, as in some of the later plays of Euripides[1]. But in many instances the poet who wrote last was assisted, rather than impeded, by the example of his predecessors. Such was the case, as we have seen, with the fable about Philoctetes, which both Aeschylus and Euripides handled with considerable success, but of which the full capacities were not revealed, until it was finally reconstructed by Sophocles[2].

The licence permitted to the tragic poets in adapting and remodelling the sacred legends may seem remarkable in modern times. But the mythology of the Greeks stood on a peculiar footing. Though it formed the basis of the national belief, it had never been formulated by sacerdotal influence into a settled creed. It was a free and luxuriant popular growth, infinitely complex in its ramifications, and often varying widely in different districts. From the earliest times it had been transformed and modified by successive generations of poets, to whom, in the absence of any professional teachers of religion, the task of expounding the old fables had naturally fallen. The freedom which they had exercised for many centuries was now extended to the writers of tragedy, who were allowed to handle these sacred subjects in a manner which no modern poet could imitate, if dealing with the events of Bible history. As long as the main outlines of the story were preserved, everything else might be altered at will. It was necessary, for example, that Clytaemnestra should be slain by Orestes, and Eriphyle by Alcmaeon; but the question of time, place, and motive was left to the discretion of the poet[3]. Even these slight limitations were not always observed, and more radical innovations were sometimes introduced, as in the case of the slaughter of Medea's children—a crime which Euripides transferred to Medea herself, though tradition had previously assigned it to other persons[4].

[1] E.g. in the Electra, Oedipus, and Antigone. See pp. 183, 194, 301.

[2] See p. 196.

[3] Aristot. Poet. cc. 14 and 17.

[4] See p. 289. Cp. also the free treatment by Euripides of the legends about Helen and Iphigeneia (pp. 303, 305).

The insight with which the Attic poets used their liberty, so as to spiritualise the old legends, and convert childish fairy tales into imposing tragic spectacles, has been exemplified in numerous instances which it is unnecessary to repeat[1]. The variety of dramatic motive which they were able to extract from their limited materials is a wonderful proof of their genius. Few of the deeper problems of existence are left untouched in their tragedies, which may be described with justice as a 'criticism of life.' The modern drama, in spite of its rich luxuriance of subject, is not really so comprehensive in its moral range, its area being restricted by the predominance which it assigns to a single passion—the passion of love. This fact has often been lamented by some of the greatest of modern dramatists. Voltaire complains that he was unable to get his Œdipe exhibited upon the stage until he had spoiled it by the introduction of an amorous episode; and Corneille, though sighing for 'more noble and masculine passions,' was compelled to submit to the universal tendency, and to convert his Caesar into a lover, and make him languish at the feet of Cleopatra[2]. The Greek drama may sometimes appear to have erred on the opposite side, and to be deficient in the more sentimental feelings and emotions; but by neglecting the sexual passion it has at any rate been saved from that general effeminacy of motive which Voltaire affirms, not without some show of truth, to be the most fatal defect of modern tragedy[3].

Besides being taken from legendary sources the action of Greek tragedy is also confined to regal and princely families; and Aristotle lays it down as an axiom that the chief characters should be persons of exalted station[4]. The question has often

[1] See especially the observations on the Prometheus, Agamemnon, and Eumenides of Aeschylus (pp. 67, 116, 120); the Philoctetes of Sophocles (p. 196); and the Medea and Hercules Furens of Euripides (pp. 290, 299).

[2] Voltaire's Œdipe, Préface de l'édition de 1729. Corneille, Premiers Discours, p. 322 (Charpentier et Cie, 1886).

[3] See his Discours sur la Tragédie, and his Lettre à M. Maffei (prefixed to the Mérope).

[4] Aristot. Poet. c. 13 (speaking of the most suitable character for tragedy) ἔστι δὲ τοιοῦτος ὁ μήτε ἀρετῇ διαφέρων

been discussed, whether this pomp of outward circumstance is really essential even to the deepest form of tragedy, and whether there is any intrinsic connexion between external dignity and dramatic effectiveness. Voltaire, as is well known, defended the practice on the ground that the fate of kings and princes, since it involves whole nations in a like catastrophe, is more impressive than that of ordinary people. This theory, however, as Schlegel pointed out, even if justified by occasional examples from the modern stage, is certainly not applicable to the tragedy of the Greeks, in which little emphasis is laid on the regal station of the characters. They are painted as men, rather than as kings; it is as men that they excite our sympathy; and the effect of their sufferings on the nation at large is seldom brought into prominence. Nor is there much truth in another suggestion, that as action is the essence of the drama, great leaders of men, whose lives are passed in public activity, supply the most suitable subjects. Even ordinary life can provide actions, if not of great political import, yet of the deepest moral significance; and in many of the Greek tragedies, though the outward setting is grand and majestic, the plot is essentially one of domestic life, and might have been taken from any class of people. Nevertheless, the fact remains that most of the great poetical tragedies of the world, in modern as well as ancient times, are concerned with the fortunes of the great and the exalted. This result, however, appears to have been due, not so much to any inherent insufficiency in plots of humble origin, as to the fear lest the profound and solemn tone of the highest tragedy might seem incongruous and out of place in the midst of ordinary and familiar surroundings.

§ 3. *The Characters.*

In all dramas of the dignified and classical species there is a general similarity in the mode of representing character. The heroes and heroines are drawn in broad and general outline, and not in minute detail; they resemble types of humanity, rather

καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ . . . τῶν ἐν μεγάλῃ δόξῃ ὄντων καὶ εὐτυχίᾳ, οἷον Οἰδίπους καὶ Θυέστης καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων γενῶν ἐπιφανεῖς ἄνδρες.

than separate personalities. Nor is the reason difficult to perceive. The points which give distinctiveness and individuality to a portrait are, not so much the grand and impressive exhibitions of passion, as the various little personal touches, familiar utterances, and trifling but significant details. Traits of this kind seem to clothe the character in flesh and blood, and make it stand before us in bodily reality. But in the grand style of composition these homely minutiae, being incompatible with the dignity of the general tone, can only be introduced in a sparing and intermittent fashion; and the result is a certain loss of vividness in the portraiture. If we compare the personages of the modern classical stage with those of the romantic dramatists, the contrast is obvious. Horace and Cinna, Phèdre and Andromaque, seem like a different class of beings by the side of Hamlet, Othello, and Desdemona.

Now the tragedy of the Greeks was essentially a drama of the grand and majestic type. The dignity of its tone, though varying in different poets, and though occasionally relaxed, was never allowed to lapse into familiarity. Even Euripides, who went the furthest in the direction of realistic plainness, only ventured to insert his touches of realism with caution and reserve, and was careful to veil them under a graceful covering of poetical diction. Hence the mode of portraiture adopted by the Greek poets is of a corresponding kind. Their characters are typical figures, like those of the French stage; they have none of the strongly-marked personality of Shakespeare's men and women. The qualities which they display are broad and elementary qualities, common to whole classes of mankind; the minuter traits which reveal the individual are mostly omitted.

The danger of this exclusive and dignified mode of delineation is that it often results in vagueness and pomposity, and many of the modern imitators of antique tragedy have fallen victims to the tendency. But the Greeks are singularly free from any such defect, and it is one of their peculiar excellencies that they were able to successfully combine ideal grandeur with truth and simplicity. Their portraits of human beings, though painted only in outline, and with a few powerful touches, are always

lifelike and distinct. The heroes of the Greek stage never degenerate, like some of Alfieri's characters, into mere personifications of vice and virtue; nor are their natural qualities obscured by excessive and artificial dignity, as in the French drama. Though resembling types of mankind in the simple and general nature of their attributes, yet they are genuine living creatures, with whose passions we can sympathise. Beings such as Deianeira and the aged Oedipus, even if they fall short of the vivid reality of a Lear and a Cordelia, nevertheless excite a feeling of personal attachment in the mind of the reader which no mere abstractions could produce.

The broad and simple style of characterisation which we have been describing is strongly recommended by Aristotle, and forms the ground of his celebrated remark concerning the superiority of poetry over history. Poetry, he declares, is more scientific and universal; for while history merely records the actions of individuals, poetry exhibits, in typical specimens, the qualities and attributes of whole classes of mankind[1]. Such is the theory expounded in the Poetics, and it is one which has naturally given rise to much hostile criticism. Nor can it be denied that, as far as the merits of the historian are concerned, the comparison instituted by Aristotle is partial and one-sided; since it confines the attention to a single point, the delineation of character, and takes no account of those other functions of history—the tracing of general causes and general laws—in which its scientific value mainly consists. But if we except the undue depreciation of history, the remark on poetical characterisation contains an undeniable truth. The persons of a drama, as Aristotle observes, should undoubtedly be typical specimens of humanity, if their fortunes are to impress or instruct. The most perfect of all styles of character-drawing

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 8 *φανερὸν δὲ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων καὶ ὅτι οὐ τὸ τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τοῦτο ποιητοῦ ἔργον ἐστίν, ἀλλ' οἷα ἂν γένοιτο . . . διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. ἔστι δὲ καθόλου μέν, τῷ ποίῳ τὰ ποῖα ἄττα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οὗ στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη· τὸ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον, τί Ἀλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν.* Cp. also c. 15.

is that which, while preserving the type, invests it with distinctive personal features. Shakespeare's characters possess this quality in the highest degree. They combine the most vivid individual reality with universal truth and applicability. If Hamlet is painted in such realistic colours, that he seems like a man whom we have known and met, he is none the less a true and faithful representative of a whole class of similar beings, in whom the critical and introspective spirit has been developed to excess. Greek tragedy hardly attains to this pitch of excellence; it emphasises the type at the expense of the individual. But for this very reason it is free from any trace of that graver fault—the fault of exaggerated individualisation—by which the characters are rendered so peculiar and eccentric, that they cease to represent any class or type of humanity. In the later epochs of literature it often happens that the desire for novelty of effect attracts men to this study of the strange, and diseased, and morbid; and many examples might be cited from the plays and novels of the present century. But characters of this kind, being outside the lines of ordinary experience, attract far less sympathy, and are far less useful as examples, than those in which the broad traits of humanity are preserved.

Another of Aristotle's opinions on the same subject is hardly less famous. After discussing the characters in general, he proceeds to consider the necessary qualifications of the hero, or leading personage, in a tragedy; and comes to the conclusion that he should not be a man prominent for virtue or vice, but rather one of those mixed natures, partly good and partly bad, whose errors and frailties lead them into misfortune. This inference is based on his doctrine concerning the purpose of tragedy, which is to excite pity and fear. But pity is a feeling not devoid of selfishness, and is only aroused by cases which excite the fear of a like calamity for ourselves. Hence the fortunes of men of perfect goodness, or consummate villainy, cannot give rise to fear or pity, because the average spectator, being neither saint nor villain, has little reason to anticipate a similar fate. But when the hero is a man of mixed character, like the ordinary run of human beings, his sufferings come home

to the hearts of the audience, and inspire them with sympathetic terror[1].

The restriction which Aristotle here proposes to place on the choice of tragic themes has not as a rule been received with much approbation, even by critics who are accustomed in other matters to bow to his authority. To modern minds his reasoning on the subject is apt to appear pedantic and far-fetched, and it seems open to dispute whether his definition of pity is really an exhaustive one. But whatever the scientific value of the definition, there is no doubt that the inference to which it leads is inconsistent with the frequent practice of the Greek theatre. Many of the finest Greek tragedies, such as the Antigone and Hercules Furens, derive their whole pathos from the unmerited sufferings of persons of extraordinary virtue and heroism; while on the other hand in one of them—the Agamemnon—the leading personage is a murderess. Some also of the great tragedies of modern times, such as Polyeucte and Richard III, would have to be condemned, if Aristotle's doctrine was accepted. Corneille, in discussing this question, justly points out that admiration for the heroic endurance of undeserved misfortune is as fine a tragic motive as compassion for frailty resembling our own; and that even vicious characters, like his own Cléopatre, if their criminality is relieved by a certain grandeur of aim and purpose, may form impressive subjects for tragedy[2]. Although, therefore, these mixed characters are undoubtedly the most interesting from the psychological point of view, yet to confine the drama to such cases would be an unnecessary and unfortunate limitation. The only real test, in matters of this kind, is actual experience.

§ 4. *Unity of Structure.*

The principle which underlies the structure of the best Greek tragedies is the desire for intensity rather than variety of impression. The gratification which may be caused by multiplicity of scenes, and complexity of interests, is deliberately

[1] Poet. c. 13; Rhet. 2. 8.

[2] Corneille, Second Discours, p. 347 foll. (Charpentier et Cie, 1886).

sacrificed. The aim of the poet, in presenting a tragic story upon the stage, is to divest it of everything that is irrelevant and unnecessary, and to fix the mind of the audience upon a single all-absorbing issue. The influence of this constant striving after simplicity of effect has already been pointed out on many occasions in the notices of the individual poets; but it may be convenient in the present place to consider the question from a more general point of view, and in special reference to what have been called the three unities of time, place, and action. First, then, as to unity of action. The observance of this rule, which is obviously by far the most important of the three, is carried on the Greek stage to the furthest possible limits. In all the more typical tragedies of the Greeks the tendency is to concentrate the attention, not only on one subject, but on a single portion of that subject. A large part of the story is taken for granted; the preliminaries are briefly indicated by allusion or narrative; only the supreme crisis is selected for actual representation. The romantic drama adopts a more leisurely and picturesque manner of treatment. It prefers to begin at the commencement, to linger over the earlier incidents, and to work its way gradually towards the critical and decisive scenes. In Othello, for example, the first act is devoted to the history of the secret marriage at Venice. The next act takes us to Cyprus, and shows us the anxious expectancy of Desdemona, and her fervent greeting of Othello when he returns triumphant from his naval victory. Then at length begins the tragic crisis of the action. The jealous fury of Othello is seen gradually mounting from stage to stage, and increasing in intensity with each fresh suggestion of Iago, until at length it breaks forth in uncontrollable violence, and the catastrophe is reached. A Greek poet, in treating the same theme, would have begun the tragedy at the point when Othello's frenzy was reaching its height, and would have exhibited merely the supreme moments of passion and their tragic consequences.

This concentration upon the one decisive period of the story, though alien to the spirit of romantic poetry, has been

imitated successfully by the classical section of modern dramatists. But the Greeks go still further. They confine the attention for the most part to one central personage, and to one set of incidents. Here even the modern imitator has been unable to follow their example, being prevented from doing so by the simple fact that a modern tragedy is about twice the length of an ancient one. In order therefore to expand the play to the requisite size, it is necessary to abandon the extreme simplicity of the antique method, and to diversify the plot with a richer variety of interests. Any modern copy of an old tragedy will illustrate this tendency. Compare Voltaire's Œdipe with the Greek original. In the play of Sophocles the spectator can think of only one topic—the approaching fate of Oedipus; all the other characters are of secondary importance, except in so far as they retard or accelerate the doom of the chief personage. But in Voltaire two additional threads of interest have been woven into the plot—the loves of Philoctète and Jocaste, and the false accusation of Philoctète as the murderer of Laius. As a result the play gains in variety, while it loses in intensity. The struggle in the breast of Jocaste between her passion for Philoctète and her duty to her husband, the peril of Philoctète, and the anxiety of Jocaste for her lover's safety, give rise to a number of animated scenes, independent of the main course of the action, and make these characters hardly less prominent and interesting than Œdipe himself.

The second of the three unities, that of time, was not originally a law of Greek tragedy, the plots of the early dramas, as we are told by Aristotle, being unfettered by chronological limitations. In these lyrical performances, interspersed with monologue, there was little genuine representation of an action; and we may easily believe that the idea of making the imitation more exact by an approximation between the duration of the play, and the supposed duration of the story, had not as yet suggested itself. But as time went on, and tragedy became more dramatic, and more like a series of real events transacted before the eyes, the custom arose of limiting the incidents to the period of

a single day, in order to increase the illusion[1]. But even in Aeschylus the conception is far from being fully developed, and three of his tragedies—the Persae, the Agamemnon, and the Eumenides—would require a much longer space of time. After Aeschylus, however, the rule is almost invariably observed, and there are only two exceptions in the extant dramas[2]. These exceptions are themselves very trifling in character, a journey or expedition, which would naturally take two or three days, being compressed within the limits of a few hours.

The law concerning unity of place is enforced with equal strictness, and the only known instances of its violation are that in the Eumenides, where the scene changes from Delphi to Athens, and that in the Ajax, where it is transferred from the camp to the sea-shore[3]. The eccyclema, which revealed in a plastic group the events transacted within the palace, can hardly be regarded as a change of scene, since the actors who

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 5 ἔτι δὲ τῷ μήκει ἡ μὲν (τραγῳδία) ὅτι μάλιστα πειρᾶται ὑπὸ μίαν περίοδον ἡλίου εἶναι ἢ μικρὸν ἐξαλλάττειν, ἡ δὲ ἐποποιία ἀόριστος τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρει, καίτοι τὸ πρῶτον ὁμοίως ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις τοῦτο ἐποίουν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσιν.

[2] Viz. in the Trachiniae of Sophocles and the Supplices of Euripides. See pp. 189, 244.

[3] The views of Aristotle on the question of the three unities are as follows. The rule concerning unity of action is discussed at considerable length, and enforced in the strongest and most decisive terms (Poet. cc. 7 and 8). Unity of time is mentioned, in the passage just quoted (Poet. c. 5), as a law which was always observed by the later dramatists, though the language rather implies that, in Aristotle's opinion, it was one in regard to which a certain laxity might be reasonably permitted. Unity of place is nowhere expressly inculcated, but its observance is tacitly assumed as a necessary condition of theatrical representation. In this respect, as in many others, Aristotle's theory of dramatic art is limited by the existing practice of the Greek stage. He never seems to contemplate the possibility of a tragedy of the Elizabethan type, in which the locality might be changed at will. In comparing the respective merits of epic and tragic poetry, he reckons among the advantages of the former the diversity of interest which it was able to excite by shifting the scene of action from one place to another. But he makes no suggestion for the adoption of this liberty in the tragic drama. Cp. Poet. c. 24 ἔχει δὲ πρὸς τὸ ἐπεκτείνεσθαι τὸ μέγεθος πολύ τι ἡ ἐποποιία ἴδιον διὰ τὸ ἐν μὲν τραγῳδίᾳ μὴ ἐνδέχεσθαι ἅμα πραττόμενα πολλὰ μέρη μιμεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ τὸ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν μέρος μόνον· ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐποποιίᾳ διὰ τὸ διήγησιν εἶναι ἔστι πολλὰ μέρη ἅμα ποιεῖν περαινόμενα, ὑφ' ὧν οἰκείων ὄντων αὔξεται ὁ τοῦ ποιήματος ὄγκος. ὥστε τοῦτ' ἔχει τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἰς μεγαλοπρέπειαν καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλειν τὸν ἀκούοντα καὶ ἐπεισοδιοῦν ἀνομοίοις ἐπεισοδίοις· τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον ταχὺ πληροῦν ἐκπίπτειν ποιεῖ τὰς τραγῳδίας.

were already present outside the building, before the appearance of the tableau, continued to remain in the same position.

It often happens in the history of national theatres that what seem to be their most essential and characteristic features were due originally to some accidental cause. Thus in the Elizabethan stage the rapid and incessant changes of scene, which are the despair of the modern manager, were suggested and facilitated in the first instance by the total absence of painted scenery. The background was a mere wall, covered with tapestry, and the decoration was left to the imagination of the spectators. Hence the constant change of locality not only involved no additional expense, but being unrepresented to the eye, was less destructive of the illusion than in modern reproductions. Another characteristic of the Shakespearian drama —the calm and tranquil manner in which the scenes are brought to a close—originated in the casual circumstance that the old English theatre had no drop-scene. The successive portions of a play were terminated, not by a curtain, but by the actors walking off the stage; and for this reason it was impossible to finish up with a climax, as is now the invariable custom.

In the same way it will be found, on reviewing the history of Greek tragedy, that the unity and simplicity of structure which it displays were due in a large measure to the force of circumstances. The determining factor in this case was the chorus. The chorus, according to the regular tradition of the tragic drama, derived from the time when it had been wholly lyrical, was required to accompany the performance from first to last, its presence being demanded, not only during the progress of the action, in which it frequently took part, but also in the intervals, when it sang the lyrical odes. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that the plot should be confined to a single day and to a single place. If it had been extended over weeks and months, the unfailing presence of the same group of witnesses in the orchestra would have been a patent absurdity; while if it had been transferred from one region to another, the necessity would have arisen, either of adopting the

ridiculous supposition that the chorus travelled about in a corresponding manner, or of introducing a fresh chorus with each alteration of locality. In the Eumenides, the sole example of a considerable change of scene, the case is exceptional, the chorus there consisting of the Furies, the ministers of vengeance, whose duty it is to pursue Orestes from refuge to refuge. Hence their departure from Delphi, and subsequent reappearance at Athens, are not unnatural.

More than this, the unity of action and the concentration of interest in ancient tragedy appear to be indirectly associated with its choral origin. While the chorus was still predominant, the actors, as we have seen, held a subordinate position, and their number was for many years limited to two. As long as this was the case, it followed as a matter of course that the plot should be of a simple character, and that it should centre mainly round one leading figure. This custom, originally due to necessity, became a sort of tradition on the Greek stage, and was retained with slight modifications by later poets, even when an increase in the number of the actors had opened the way for greater diversity of treatment.

It is clear, then, that the part played by the chorus in determining the general character of Greek tragedy was one of great importance. Still, it is easy to ascribe too much significance to mere external causes of this kind. After all, the lines on which any form of art develops itself are mainly determined by popular sentiment. The first suggestion of a particular tendency may often, it is true, be supplied by some casual circumstance; but the subsequent growth and elaboration of that tendency are impossible, unless it is in harmony with the national spirit. The simple structure of the Athenian tragedy, though a natural result of its environment, suited the severity of classic taste, and was therefore accepted without reluctance. It would have been easy for the Greeks, if they had felt the inclination, to create a more varied and complex type of drama; in fact, their custom of performing three short tragedies in succession offered a favourable opportunity for such a reform. These tragedies had already been grouped by Aeschylus

into a trilogy, embracing in a single whole a vast series of events; and a further extension of this principle might have given rise to a new kind of drama resembling, in length and richness, the dramas of Shakespeare. But the feeling of the Greeks was opposed to any such drastic transformation; and the successors of Aeschylus, instead of developing his innovation to greater lengths, preferred to abandon it altogether, and returned of their own accord to the simplicity of the earlier style.

The discussion concerning the value of the three unities, and their applicability to the modern stage, was at one time the burning question of dramatic criticism; but the old controversies have long since been settled, and their interest at the present time is only historical. All the critics now agree that unity of action is essential to a well-constructed plot, though they interpret the phrase in a far wider sense than that in which it was understood by the Greek dramatists. But as for the unities of time and place, they regard them as rules which owed their origin to the exceptional circumstances of the ancient tragedy, and which it would be impossible to enforce on the stage of the present day. Indeed, the modern tragedy is too long, and too full of varied interest, to be compressed within a space of twenty-four hours, or confined to one locality. Even the poets of the classical school found this to be the case, as Corneille candidly admits; and their observance of these restrictions was apparent rather than real[1]. The 'day' of the old French drama, as a matter of fact, is a purely conventional space of time, and embraces far more events than any day known to mankind. The 'place' is equally extraordinary. Various conflicting interests have to be pursued in the selfsame spot. A room of the palace is generally selected for the purpose, and here every one comes to transact his business.

[1] Corneille, Second Discours, pp. 369, 377; Examen de Cinna, p. 240; Examen de Polyeucte, p. 315; Examen de Pompée, p. 383 (Charpentier et Cie, 1886). Cp. the naïve remark in the Examen du Cid, p. 95, 'le roman lui auroit donné sept ou huit jours de patience avant que de l'en presser de nouveau; mais les vingt-quatre heures ne l'ont pas permis; c'est l'incommodité de la règle.'

The king consults his ministers on affairs of state. As soon as he is gone, the conspirators meet in the very same chamber to plot his assassination. When their consultations are over, the lovers of the play choose this identical apartment for the exchange of their most tender confidences. No amount of artifice or contrivance can conceal the absurdity of such an arrangement, which tends to destroy the illusion in the minds of the audience as effectively as any change of scenery.

§ 5. *Treatment of the Plot.*

In discussing the dramas of Sophocles and Euripides we have shown that the essential difference between the plot of the ancient and the modern tragedy lies in the treatment of the catastrophe. The object of the modern poet is to envelop it in secrecy, and to keep his audience in doubt and suspense until the close of the play. His methods are accurately described in the advice which Lope de Vega gives to dramatic authors. 'Be careful,' he says, 'to conceal the dénouement till the last scene, and to stimulate curiosity by the suggestion of alternative issues; when the audience know the result, they turn their faces to the doors, and their backs upon the actors, from whom they have nothing more to learn[1].' The ancient poet, on the other hand, relies very little upon this method of rousing interest, and prefers to let the spectators know from the first the goal towards which his characters are drifting. So far from reserving the catastrophe for the last scene, and working up towards a final climax, he pursues the very opposite course, and supplements the excitement and agony of the dénouement with one or two scenes of greater tranquillity, in which the sufferers gradually calm down from their first paroxysms of grief into a state of resignation and acquiescence. In the Oedipus Tyrannus, when the murder and incest are discovered, and Jocasta has hung herself, and Oedipus put out his eyes, the action is really over, and a modern dramatist would bring the play to a conclusion. But in the Greek poet Oedipus

[1] Lope de Vega, Nouvel Art Dramatique, p. lxxi (Hinard's French translation).

appears once more upon the stage, bewailing his fate at first with violent outbursts, then with a more pensive melancholy, until at length, at the request of Creon, he returns submissively to the palace. The last feeling aroused by a Greek tragedy is one of repose, rather than of excitement and surprise.

Various reasons may be assigned for this indifference to the element of curiosity. In the first place, as the subjects of the old tragedy were already familiar to every one, it would have been difficult to mystify the audience concerning the final result. But this obstacle was not a fatal one. Euripides, in some of his later plays, showed the possibility of exciting surprise and expectancy by a free manipulation of received tradition; and modern imitations of ancient tragedy, such as Phèdre and Oreste and Andromaque, offer more convincing examples. Moreover, many of the modern classical dramas are founded on celebrated incidents in the lives of ancient characters, such as Caesar, Alexander, Brutus, and Cleopatra; yet as regards perplexity and suspense, the plots of such poets as Corneille and Racine are not to be surpassed. In plays of this kind, although the general issue of an action is well known, yet the situations may be so involved, and the conflicting interests so irreconcileable, that no one can foresee how that issue is to be reached; and the manner of the conclusion may excite as much curiosity as an unknown story.

Another, and perhaps a more important reason was the presence of the chorus, which in other respects exercised such a decisive influence on the development of the drama. The perplexity of an action arises, in most cases, from the intrigues and counterplots of two opposing parties, whose prospects are so equally balanced, that the audience is uncertain which side will prove successful in the end, and how the hero will escape from the dangers which encompass him. But these secret manœuvres cannot be carried on before the eyes of unfavourable witnesses. In the Andromaque, for instance, it would have been impossible for Hermione to plot the murder of Neoptolème, if a number of Thessalian natives, friendly to Neoptolème, had been watching her all the time. This

difficulty, as we have pointed out, had already begun to be felt even on the ancient stage[1]; and it is doubtful whether plots of the modern type could have been attempted with entire success, until the chorus had been discarded.

But the purpose of Greek tragedy, in its highest efforts, was inconsistent with the excitement which is caused by curiosity. The favourite and most impressive theme of the old tragic poets was the irony of destiny, and the futility of human wisdom. To exhibit man as the unconscious victim of fate, boldly advancing on his own destruction, and more and more confident as he approaches his doom, was the object of most of their greatest dramas[2]. But to unfold the full pathos of the situation, it was necessary to lift the veil from the eyes of the spectators, and to let them discern clearly the dark figure of destiny in the background, towards which the doomed man was being drawn with slow but certain steps. The intense and absorbing interest of such a spectacle, in which the audience, witnessing the events in the light of full knowledge, were able to realise the vanity of the victim's hopes, and to perceive how each sanguine effort was only bringing him closer to the abyss, more than compensated for the absence of suspense concerning the nature of the issue; and the tragic stage has produced nothing, in the whole course of its history, that could be more thrilling and more impressive than these dark pictures of the inflexibility of the gods.

On the modern stage, however, such themes have seldom been attempted. The modern drama is more psychological in tone, and prefers to depict mankind, not as blind instruments in the hands of destiny, but as the slaves of their own evil passions, aware of the real nature of their position, and struggling in vain against the dictates of conscience. The interest in such cases lies in the conflict between antagonistic

[1] See p. 251.

[2] Hence the much greater importance in the ancient, than in the modern, drama of the ἀναγνώρισις, or recognition, by which a man who through ignorance has committed, or been upon the point of committing, some fatal deed, discovers the real nature of his position. Aristotle (Poet. c. 16) devotes a whole chapter to an analysis of the different kinds of recognition.

motives. Euripides, in his Medea, as we have previously shown, had anticipated the tendency of the modern theatre by introducing a plot of this kind; but the fatalistic drama had a greater fascination for ancient audiences. This difference of taste appears very clearly in some of Corneille's criticisms on Aristotle's Art of Poetry. Aristotle there remarks that the crimes most suitable for dramatic treatment are those committed against friends or relations; and he divides such crimes into two classes, those which are accomplished or undertaken in ignorance of the real personality of the victim, and those which are done in full knowledge. Of the two he greatly prefers the former class. The crime, he says, is less horrible, and the subsequent discovery appalling in its effects[1]. He would therefore place such tragedies as the Oedipus and the Taurian Iphigeneia in a higher rank than the Medea, where the deed is committed by a conscious agent. Corneille, who generally accepts with submission every utterance of Aristotle, here ventures to protest. He boldly declares his opinion that those tragedies in which the deed is done through ignorance are inferior to the others, and will not cause 'many tears,' since, though the subsequent discovery may produce a temporary excitement, the general course of the plot offers no opportunity for the display of conflicting impulses. But if the agent knows what he is about, his agony of mind, when distracted between passion and duty, offers the most impressive of all tragic spectacles. He then proceeds to cite several examples from his own plays, such as Cinna commanded by his mistress to betray his friend, and Chimène compelled to avenge her father by the death of her lover[2]. In these remarks Corneille, without doubt, has accurately gauged the tendency of modern taste, for which the antique type of tragedy has no longer much attraction. The play of irreconcileable passions in the same mind is the favourite subject of the modern drama, and the Medea, in consequence, has found far more imitators than the Oedipus Tyrannus.

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 14.
[2] Corneille, Second Discours, p. 354 foll. (Charpentier et Cie, 1886).

§ 6. *Formal Divisions of Greek Tragedy*[1].

Regarded from the structural point of view, Greek tragedy falls into two main divisions—the dialogue and the choral odes. The dialogue contains most of the real movement of the play, and is spoken by the actors from the stage; the choral odes mark the pauses in the story, and are chanted by the chorus in the orchestra[2]. The performance, therefore, considered generally, is an alternation of speech and song. But there is no rigorous line of demarcation between these two constituent elements of tragedy; on the contrary, they are skilfully fused and intermingled. The chorus often take part in the dialogue, either as speakers or singers; the actors are often roused by their passions into musical utterance, either jointly with the chorus, or by themselves. The result is a graceful and harmonious fusion of the lyrical and the dramatic, which modern tragedy, when attempting the introduction of a chorus, has seldom been able to imitate with success.

(1) *The Dialogue.*

The dialogue of Greek tragedy differs from that of the modern drama in various important points, and especially in the much greater prominence which it assigns to narrative. This prominence was due, originally, to the peculiar development of tragedy from the intermixture of monologues with choral odes. But in later times the practice was retained from various causes—partly as a convenient method of supplying the requisite preliminary explanations; partly owing to that refinement of feeling, which preferred the narration to the actual exhibition of deeds of violence; partly, also, as a result of mere conservatism, and a desire to keep to the old traditions of the stage.

[1] See especially, on this subject, Ascherson's Umrisse der Gliederung des griechischen Drama (Jahrbücher für Philologie, Supplementband iv, pp. 423-450), and Gleditsch, Metrik der Griechen und Römer (Müller's Handbuch der klassischen Alterthumswissenschaft, vol. ii).

[2] Poll. 4. 123 *καὶ σκηνὴ μὲν ὑποκριτῶν ἴδιον, ἡ δὲ ὀρχήστρα τοῦ χοροῦ.* Phrynichus, p. 163 *σὺ μέντοι ἔνθα μὲν κωμῳδοὶ καὶ τραγῳδοὶ ἀγωνίζονται, λογεῖον ἐρεῖς, ἔνθα δὲ οἱ αὐλητὰι καὶ οἱ χοροί, ὀρχήστραν.*

Another point of difference is the comparative infrequency of soliloquies and asides, which were scarcely possible on the Greek stage, owing to the presence of the chorus. Hence the place of the aside is taken by those bitter and ironical speeches, frequent in Greek tragedy, which are understood in a different sense by the chorus, and by the person to whom they are addressed. The soliloquy is seldom employed, except in the prologue, before the chorus has entered, or on those rare occasions, such as the dying speech of Ajax, when it has left the orchestra for the time being.

The dialogue is divided by the intervention of the choral odes into successive portions, usually called acts[1]. In the dramas of the fifth century the number of these acts was not as yet fixed by rule, and though generally five, varies from four in the Persae to seven in the Oedipus Coloneus. The mention of five as the regulation number occurs for the first time in Horace[2]. The practice, however, had already become universal by the time of the New Comedy, from which it was afterwards adopted by Plautus and Terence[3]. When it first arose is uncertain; but it is clearly connected with the decline of the chorus. In the older tragedy, while the chorus still flourished, there was no real break in the progress of a play from start to conclusion, since the choral odes, even when consisting merely of sentiments and reflexions, might nevertheless be said to carry on the action to a certain extent. Hence the division into parts was not as yet very noticeable or important. But with the introduction of musical interludes in place of the old choruses, the distinction between the successive acts became far more conspicuous. Under these circumstances it was natural that the matter should be reduced to rule; and

[1] In Greek the general name for such divisions was *μέρος*. Cp. Vita Aesch. p. 3 (Dindorf) *ἕως τρίτου μέρους*. Aristoph. Ran. 1120 *τὸ πρῶτον μέρος*.

[2] Ars Poet. 189 'neve minor neu sit quinto productior actu | fabula quae posci vult et spectata reponi.'

[3] Donatus on Ter. Adelph., 'quinque actus choris divisos a Graecis poetis.' Andronicus *περὶ τάξεως ποιητῶν* (Dindorf's Aristoph. p. 33), *ἡ δὲ νέα (κωμῳδία) . . . ἧς ἐπίσημος Μένανδρος καὶ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις Τερέντιος καὶ Πλαῦτος. χρῆται δὲ προτάσει καὶ ἐπιτάσει καὶ ἀναστροφῇ ὁ Τερέντιος καὶ εἰς πέντε σκηνὰς διαιρεῖ τὸ δρᾶμα.*

the number five, already the most prevalent among the older dramatists, probably acquired its traditional sanction in the course of the fourth century. Not that there is any intrinsic value or significance in the number, except that it satisfies the tendency of the human mind to follow established precedent even in details of little consequence. As for the acts of a tragedy, if any rule is to be laid down, there seems to be more reason in the procedure of the early Spanish drama, which fixed them at three, one devoted to the introduction, one to the complication, and a third to the dénouement.

The word 'act' is perhaps rather misleading, as applied to the divisions of the ancient Greek tragedy. The successive portions of the dialogue vary greatly in size and importance, one of thirty or forty lines often being followed by one of two or three hundred. Moreover, as we have just pointed out, the action is not ostensibly broken off during the choral performances. Indeed, in many cases, while the choruses are being sung, the actors still occupy the stage; and sometimes they even join the chorus in a musical dialogue, which takes the place of the usual ode. Thus in the Prometheus the leading personage is present throughout the whole of the play; and in the Philoctetes the majority of the intervals are passed in lyrical conversations between chorus and actors. Hence in the following pages the word 'scene' will be used to describe the divisions of the dialogue, since it appears to convey a more accurate impression of their real character.

The first scene of all, which preceded the entrance of the chorus, was called the 'prologue,' and its invention is ascribed to Thespis[1]. The old lyrical dramas of the sixth century began, of course, with song. But when Thespis introduced an actor,

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 12 ἔστι δὲ πρόλογος μὲν μέρος ὅλον τραγῳδίας τὸ πρὸ χοροῦ παρόδου. Themistius, or. 26, 316 D (quoting from Aristotle), Θέσπις δὲ πρόλογόν τε καὶ ῥῆσιν ἐξεῦρεν. Ascherson (l. c. p. 428) contends that the prologue was an invention of a later date than the time of Thespis, on the grounds (1) that there is no prologue in the oldest extant tragedies, the Supplices and the Persae, (2) that in the early drama the necessary explanations could easily have been given by the chorus in their opening song. But these reasons are hardly sufficient to invalidate Aristotle's statement. See on this point p. 31, note 1.

and proceeded to diversify the choral odes with formal speeches, he started the practice of commencing the play with a narrative, and introducing the chorus later on. This preliminary narrative or 'prologue' eventually developed into the opening scene of Greek tragedy. But long after the time of Thespis the old custom was occasionally retained, in cases where the simplicity of the plot required little explanation. Thus the two earliest of the extant tragedies of Aeschylus—the Supplices and the Persae—both begin with a processional ode; and two of the lost dramas, the Myrmidons and the Prometheus Unbound, are known to have commenced in the same way[1]. After the Persae of Aeschylus, however, there is no further example of a lyrical introduction to a tragedy[2]. But the memory of the ancient usage was preserved in the formula employed at the dramatic festivals by the herald, who, in summoning a poet to commence his play, bade him 'lead in his chorus[3].'

The opening scenes or prologues of Aeschylus are usually very simple and archaic in character, and consist of a soliloquy or harangue, followed sometimes by a brief and formal dialogue. The Prometheus is the only play which begins with a rapid and animated conversation. The conversational form is adopted in all cases by Sophocles. Euripides recurs to the older practice, and even goes beyond it, substituting for the soliloquies and harangues of Aeschylus a narrative obviously addressed to the spectators; but he usually continues the scene with a vivacious dialogue.

The example set by Euripides was carried still further in the New Comedy. These prefatory narratives, instead of forming an integral portion of the play, and being spoken by one of the characters, as in Euripides, began to be detached from the body of the composition, and assigned to an extra personage; and the term 'prologue,' which originally denoted the whole of the opening scene, was henceforth confined to the separate intro-

[1] Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. pp. 42 and 63.

[2] The nearest instance is in the Rhesus, which begins with a musical dialogue between the chorus and Hector.

[3] Aristoph. Acharn. 11 εἴσαγ', ὦ Θέογνι, τὸν χορόν.

duction. Prologues of this kind, explaining the contents of the play, are often employed in Plautus, and spoken by a person called the Prologus. In Terence, again, the connexion between prologue and play becomes more remote than ever, and the introductory speech is used as a vehicle for literary criticism or polemical discussion. From this source is derived the prologue of the English Restoration Drama, in which the author discourses about things in general through the mouth of one of the actors.

The history of the epilogue is very similar. It has already been shown that the speeches of the 'deus ex machina' in Euripides were really of the nature of epilogues, though inseparable from the main structure of the play. The New Comedy proceeded to sever the connexion, as in the case of the prologue. Many of the Plautine comedies conclude with a speech delivered by the actors in their own person, and containing either some further information about the end of the story, or some general reflexions of a moral kind[1]. This practice led the way to the modern epilogue, with its humorous and discursive remarks about theatrical matters.

The first scene, then, in Attic tragedy was the 'prologue'; the last scene, which followed the final choral ode, was called the 'exodus[2].' This term originally denoted, not any portion of the dialogue, but the song of the chorus as it made its 'exit' from the orchestra[3]. The older tragedy concluded, as it began, with a lyrical performance; and the solemn procession of the chorus, marching out to the accompaniment of song and music, would give an impressive termination to the play. Two of the tragedies of Aeschylus, the Supplices and the Eumenides, close

[1] The Captivi, Bacchides, Asinaria, Epidicus, Cistellaria, and Casina conclude with an epilogue of this kind, spoken by the 'grex' or 'caterva.' The epilogue at the end of the Mercator is delivered by a single actor.

[2] Aristot. Poet. c. 12 ἔξοδος δὲ μέρος ὅλον τραγῳδίας μεθ' ὃ οὐκ ἔστι χοροῦ μέλος.

[3] Vita Aristoph. p. 37 (Dindorf), ἔξοδος τὸ ἐπὶ τέλει λεγόμενον τοῦ χοροῦ. Schol. Aristoph. Vesp. 270 τὰ δὲ ἐξοδικά, ἅπερ ἐπὶ τῇ ἐξόδῳ τοῦ δράματος ᾄδεται. Pollux, 4. 108 καὶ μέλος δέ τι ἐξόδιον, ὃ ἐξιόντες ᾖδον. Tzetzes, περὶ τραγικῆς ποιήσεως, 24 ἡ δ' ἔξοδός τις τυγχάνει χοροῦ λόγος, | μεθ' ὃν χοροῖς οὐκ ἔστι τι λέγειν μέλος. Hence the ἔξοδος is classed by Pollux (4. 53) along with the πάροδος and στάσιμον.

in this manner; and the Persae ends with a dirge chanted in alternation by the actors and the chorus. But the later poets, in reducing the significance of the choral part, dispensed with this imposing musical conclusion, and generally substituted a few anapaests, spoken by the coryphaeus as he led the way out of the orchestra. Hence the word 'exodus' gradually dropped its old significance, and came to be applied to the whole of the final portion of the dialogue.

All the intermediate scenes, that is to say, all those which were separated from one another by the occurrence of a choral song, were called 'epeisodia[1].' This term, which denotes etymologically something that 'follows upon the entrance of the chorus[2],' would only be applicable, in the strict sense, to the first of the intervening scenes, and must have been afterwards extended to the others by analogy[3]. Its additional meaning of an 'irrelevant insertion'—an 'episode' in the modern sense—arose from the fact that in the older tragedy, in which the chorus played the chief part, these spoken portions were regarded as a kind of interlude, and their importance was comparatively small[4].

(2) *The Lyrics.*

To turn next to the lyrical part of tragedy. This may be divided into three kinds—that which was sung by the chorus alone, that which was sung by the actors alone, and that which was sung by actors and chorus in combination.

First, then, as to the songs of the chorus. By far the most

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 12 ἐπεισόδιον δὲ μέρος ὅλον τραγῳδίας τὸ μεταξὺ ὅλων χορικῶν μελῶν.

[2] This seems to be the most probable derivation, since εἴσοδος was the regular word for the entrance of the chorus (Pollux, 4. 108), as also for the place by which it entered (Aristoph. Nub. 326, Av. 296). Others, however, refer the origin of the term to the 'entrance of the actors' at the conclusion of each choral ode.

[3] It is possible that in the earliest dramas there was only one ἐπεισόδιον, or intervening scene. Aristotle (Poet. c. 4) mentions the introduction of ἐπεισοδίων πλήθη as a late improvement.

[4] Thus the μῦθοι ἐπεισοδιώδεις of Aristotle (Poet. c. 9) are episodic plots in the modern sense of the word. Cp. Dion. Hal., De Comp. Verb. c. 19 ἀμήχανον γὰρ εὑρεῖν τούτων ἑτέρους ἐπεισοδίοις τε πλείοσι καὶ ποικιλίαις εὐροωτέραις χρησαμένους.

important of these were the long and regular odes which marked the pauses in the action. The first was called the 'parodus' or 'entrance-song,' and in most cases was sung by the chorus as they entered the orchestra; whence the origin of the name[1]. But occasionally, in the later drama, the chorus entered in silence during the first scene, and remained for some time in the theatre before commencing their chant. Thus the Supplices of Euripides opens with the spectacle of a group of matrons kneeling in supplication round Aethra, in which silent posture they continue for several minutes, while Aethra is delivering the prologue, and it is not until her speech is finished that they break forth into song. Similar examples are also to be found in other plays[2]. For this reason Aristotle preferred to define the 'parodus,' not as the 'entrance-song,' but as the 'first song of the whole chorus'; and this definition is no doubt more exact and comprehensive[3].

The 'parodus' varied considerably in form. It was usually delivered by the whole chorus[4]. But sometimes it was sung by half-choruses in succession, as in the Ion, where the two groups of maidens, who have visited Delphi for the first time, express in alternate strains their wonder and admiration at the beauties of the temple[5]. Sometimes, again, it was divided into brief sentences, uttered in rapid sequence by the individual members; and this method produces a splendid dramatic effect in the Eumenides, where the Furies, suddenly waking from slumber, and finding that Orestes is gone, urge each other to the pursuit in a series of frenzied and breathless ejaculations[6]. In several plays, also, a musical dialogue between actors and chorus is substituted for the regular 'parodus.' One of the finest examples is the scene in the Orestes, where Electra stands watching by her brother's bedside, and the Argive maidens, approaching with furtive and cautious steps, for fear of waking

[1] Pollux, 4. 108 ἡ μὲν εἴσοδος τοῦ χοροῦ πάροδος καλεῖται. Schol. Eur. Phoen. 210 πάροδος δέ ἐστιν ᾠδὴ χοροῦ βαδίζοντος. Schol. Aristot. Poet. c. 12.

[2] E. g. in the Philoctetes of Sophocles.

[3] Poet. c. 12 πάροδος μὲν ἡ πρώτη λέξις ὅλου χοροῦ.

[4] Aristot. Poet., l. c.

[5] Ion 184–218. Cp. Alc. 77–136.

[6] Eum. 140–177.

the sick man, respond to her passionate speeches in terms of mingled compassion and curiosity[1].

The older type of 'parodus' began with a solemn march, consisting of a series of regular anapaests, while the chorus chanted as they entered the theatre. This formal commencement is found in four of the extant tragedies—the Persae, Supplices, Agamemnon, and Ajax; but was subsequently abandoned in favour of a freer and more lyrical opening. Still, a sort of traditional connexion between the 'parodus' and the impressive anapaestic rhythm appears to have long survived, and shows itself in many ways. Sometimes a few anapaestic systems are inserted in the middle of the lyrics, as in the Antigone[2]; sometimes the whole ode is composed of lyrical anapaests, as in the Hecuba[3]; often, too, when a musical dialogue is substituted for the ordinary chorus, the speeches of the performers are partly written in anapaests[4].

If the chorus left the orchestra in the course of the play, the song which they chanted on their return was called the 'epiparodus[5].' But such disappearances on the part of the chorus were carefully avoided by the Greek dramatists, unless necessitated by the plot; and there are only five examples in the surviving tragedies. Of these the most dramatic is that in the Eumenides, where the Furies, after rushing away in pursuit of Orestes, reappear later on before the temple of Athene, and break out into savage cries of exultation, as they discover their victim cowering before the statue of the goddess[6].

The rest of the regular odes, which came after the 'parodus,'

[1] Orest. 140–207. This substitution of a commus for a parodus is comparatively common in the extant tragedies: cp. Aesch. Prom. 128–192; Soph. El. 121–250, Phil. 135–218, Oed. Col. 117–253; Eur. Rhes. 1–51, Med. 131–214, Troad. 153–196, Heracleid. 73–108, Hel. 164–251, El. 167–213, Iph. Taur. 123–235.

[2] ll. 110–116, 126–133, 141–147, 155–161.

[3] ll. 100–154. The same metre is also used throughout the commi which are substituted for the ordinary parodus in Troad. 153–196 and Iph. Taur. 123–235.

[4] Cp. Aesch. Prom. 136 ff.; Soph. Phil. 144 ff., Oed. Col. 138 ff.; Eur. Rhes. 1 ff., Med. 139 ff.

[5] Pollux, 4. 108 *καὶ ἡ μὲν εἴσοδος τοῦ χοροῦ πάροδος καλεῖται, ἡ δὲ κατὰ χρείαν ἔξοδος ὡς πάλιν εἰσιόντων μετάστασις, ἡ δὲ μετὰ ταύτην εἴσοδος ἐπιπάροδος.*

[6] Eum. 244. The other examples are in Ajax 866, Helena 515, Alcestis 872, Rhesus 674.

were called 'stasima,' or 'stationary songs,' because they were sung by the chorus, not during its entrance, but after it had taken up its 'station' in the orchestra[1]. Many of the old grammarians assert, in explanation of the name, that the 'stasima' were unaccompanied by dances, and performed in one fixed position[2]. But this is probably a piece of false etymology. There appears to be no doubt that the odes of tragedy, like all choral songs among the Greeks, consisted of a combination of music and dancing[3]. In many cases the very words of the ode refer clearly to the movements of the dance[4]. The earlier poets, also, such as Thespis and Phrynichus, were called 'dancers' as well as 'poets,' because of the lively nature of their choruses[5]. In later times, however, with the decline of the chorus, the art of dancing also lost much of its old significance; and Plato, the comic poet, and contemporary of Aristophanes, referring to the dramatic choruses of his own day, laments their degeneracy, and contrasts their stolid appearance in the orchestra with the picturesque movements of the old type of singers[6]. This process of deterioration may

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 12 χορικόν· καὶ τούτου τὸ μὲν πάροδος τὸ δὲ στάσιμον. Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 1314 στάσιμον μέλος, ὃ ᾄδουσιν ἱστάμενοι οἱ χορευταί. Aristotle's definition of στάσιμον (Poet. l. c.) as μέλος χοροῦ τὸ ἄνευ ἀναπαίστου καὶ τροχαίου has never been satisfactorily explained. It is untrue to say that the stasimon is distinguished from the parodus by the absence of anapaests and trochaics. Anapaests are far from being universal in the parodus, while they occur not uncommonly at the beginning of stasima, e.g. Aesch. Pers. 532, Sept. 822, Suppl. 625, Agam. 355; and in the Medea one of the stasima (1081–1115) is anapaestic throughout. Again, the ordinary trochaic metre is frequently found in stasima, while trochaic tetrameters are equally unknown both to the stasima and the parodi of tragedy.

[2] Schol. Eur. Phoen. 210 ὅταν γὰρ ὁ χορὸς μετὰ τὴν πάροδον λέγῃ τι μέλος ἀκίνητος μένων, στάσιμον καλεῖται. Schol. Soph. Trach. 216 τὸ μελιδάριον οὐκ ἐστι στάσιμον, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς ᾠδοῦς ὀρχοῦνται.

[3] The tragic dance, which was called ἐμμέλεια, is frequently referred to. Cp. Schol. Aristoph. Nub. 540 τρία εἴδη ὀρχήσεως, ἐμμέλεια μὲν τραγική κ.τ.λ. Lucian, de Salt. c. 26 ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ ἐκείνων ὀρχήσεως ἴδιόν τι εἶδός ἐστιν, οἷον τραγικῇ μὲν ἡ ἐμμέλεια. Athen. p. 20. Pollux 4. 99. Suidas, v. Πυλάδης. Aristeid. 3, p. 713, &c.

[4] E.g. Eum. 307 ἄγε δὴ καὶ χορὸν ἄψωμεν. Herc. Fur. 761 πρὸς χοροὺς τραπώμεθα.

[5] Athen. p. 21. Phrynichus, in a poem quoted by Plutarch (Quaest. Symp. 8. 9. 3), boasts of the number of dance-figures which he had invented. Aeschylus was represented by Aristophanes (Athen. p. 21) as saying τοῖσι χοροῖς αὐτὸς τὰ σχήματ' ἐποίουν.

[6] Athen. p. 628 ὥστ' εἴ τις ὀρχοῖτ' εὖ, θέαμ' ἦν· νῦν δὲ δρῶσιν οὐδέν, | ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀπόπληκτοι στάδην ἑστῶτες ὠρύονται.

perhaps have been carried to still further lengths in the Alexandrian age, when the 'stasima' had become mere interludes; and it is possible that they were then sung with little or no accompaniment of dancing. If such was the case, the example of the later practice, combined with the misleading nature of the word 'stasimon,' would easily account for the mistaken inference of the grammarians, that even in the great period of the drama the choral odes were performed without movement.

As to the character of the dances used in the 'stasima' little is known beyond the fact that, as a rule, they were dignified and majestic, compared with those of comedy[1]. Sometimes, however, on the arrival of joyful tidings, even the tragic chorus relaxed its usual gravity, and gave vent to its delight in an ode accompanied by lively and ecstatic movements. Such odes were called 'hyporchemata,' or 'dance-songs,' and were written in rapid and vigorous measures[2]. They are often inserted with striking effect just before the catastrophe of the play, when the chorus, misled by false news, abandon themselves to a feeling of exultation which is speedily to be dashed to the ground. An impressive example of one of these sudden revolutions of sentiment is to be found in the Ajax, where the triumphant songs of the Salaminian sailors immediately precede the pathetic speech and suicide of the hero[3].

But 'stasima' of this kind were exceptional; the usual tone was grave and tragic, and the dances would correspond. Nor

[1] Athen. p. 630 ἡ δὲ γυμνοπαιδικὴ παρεμφερής ἐστι τῇ τραγικῇ ὀρχήσει, ἥτις ἐμμέλεια καλεῖται· ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ δὲ ὁρᾶται τὸ βαρὺ καὶ σεμνόν. Ibid. p. 631 ὁ μὲν κόρδαξ φορτικός, ἡ δ' ἐμμέλεια σπουδαία. Pollux 4. 105 mentions by name some of the τραγικῆς ὀρχήσεως σχήματα, but appends no description of them.

[2] Tzetzes, Trag. Poes. 97 (of the parts of tragedy) πάροδος, ἐπιπάροδος, καὶ στάσιμον, | ἕβδομον ὑπορχηματικόν κ.τ.λ. Schol. Soph. Trach. 216 τὸ γὰρ μελιδάριον οὐκ ἐστι στάσιμον, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς ὀρχοῦνται. From these notices it would seem that the grammarians separated the hyporchemata from the stasima, and placed them in a class by themselves. But there is no trace of this distinction in the Poetics (see c. 12), and it probably arose from the mistaken notion that the ordinary tragic ode was unaccompanied by dancing. It is better therefore to regard the hyporchemata, not as a peculiar species, but as a lively kind of stasimon, in which the dancing was the prominent feature, instead of being subordinate to the poetry.

[3] Aj. 693 ff. ἔφρες' ἔρωτι περιχαρὴς δ' ἀνεπτόμαν κ.τ.λ. Cp. also Eur. El. 859 ff. θὲς ἐς χορόν, ὦ φίλα, ἴχνος κ.τ.λ.; and Oed. Tyr. 1086 ff.

is it necessary to suppose that the choruses were continually moving about during the performance. In odes of a thoughtful and meditative cast we may readily believe that the 'dancing,' which among the Greeks was a very comprehensive term, consisted more in emphatic gesticulations than in movements with the feet. The tradition recorded by some ancient writers, that a chorus during the strophe moved round the altar towards the right, and during the antistrophe came back towards the left, while in the epode it stood still, has clearly no reference to tragedy[1]. Such manœuvres, though appropriate to the circular choruses of the dithyramb, would be out of place in the rectangular formations of the drama. Moreover, though the 'stasima' are always antistrophic in form, the insertion of an epode is the exception rather than the rule.

In Aeschylus the choral odes are of great length, often extending to as many as ten pairs of strophes; but in the later tragedy they never exceed three. They were usually chanted by the whole of the chorus[2]; sometimes, though rarely, by half-choruses in alternation. In the Supplices of Euripides the 'stasimon' sung by the matrons, while awaiting the issue of the battle, is of this latter kind, and assumes a highly dramatic character. The matrons are divided into two bands, one despairing, the other hopeful; and their hopes and fears are vividly expressed in a series of corresponding strophes[3]. Sometimes, also, the 'stasimon,' like the 'parodus,' was replaced by a musical dialogue between actors and chorus, as in the Philoctetes when the hero is left alone with the sailors, and his despairing cries are answered by their warnings and consolations[4].

The regular odes, then, consist of the 'parodus' and the 'stasima,' and mark the divisions between the different scenes. But often, in the middle of a dialogue, the chorus, when roused

[1] Schol. Eur. Hec. 647.

[2] Aristotle's description of the *πάροδος* as *ἡ πρώτη λέξις ὅλου χοροῦ* (Poet. c. 12) seems to imply that the other important odes were mostly sung by the whole of the chorus.

[3] Suppl. 598–633. Other examples are to be found in Rhesus 527–564 and Alcestis 77–111.

[4] Phil. 1081 ff. Cp. ibid. 827 ff.; Orest. 1246 ff.

to emotion by some sudden occurrence or striking sentiment, express their feelings in a lyrical form. These occasional lyrics, however, are differentiated from the 'stasima' by their brevity, as well as by their position[1]. In structure they are sometimes antistrophic, sometimes not; and it is uncertain whether they were sung by the whole of the chorus, or only by a part. Occasionally they are composed in the 'hyporchematic' style, to express joy and exultation[2]. They occur most frequently in the early tragedy, where the chorus still plays a prominent part, and takes a deep interest in the action. In the Septem, for instance, when the rival champions are described in successive speeches by Eteocles and the messenger, each pair of speeches is concluded with a short lyrical prayer on the part of the Theban maidens[3].

Thus far we have been describing the odes sung by the chorus alone. We have next to consider those lyrical passages which were delivered by actors and chorus in alternation. Such passages were called 'commi,' and have been already referred to as occasionally substituted for the regular choral odes[4]. The 'commus' or 'dirge' was in its origin an artistic development from the old national custom of lamentation at funerals, and derived its name from the beating of the breast by which the lamentation was accompanied. A vivid picture of one of these ancient funeral dirges is supplied by the scene at the close of the Iliad, where the body of Hector lies stretched upon the bier, surrounded by a weeping group; and the three kinswomen—Helen, Andromache, and Hecuba—pour forth their sorrow in successive speeches, while between each utterance

[1] In order to rank as a stasimon it was necessary that an ode should be of a certain size. Cp. Cramer, Anecd. Par. 1. 403 *χορικόν ἐστι τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ χοροῦ μέλος ᾀδόμενον ὅταν ἔχῃ μέγεθος ἱκανόν.* Hence it is not always easy to determine whether those lyrics which, though marking a pause in the action, consist of only a few lines (e.g. Bacch. 1153–1165), are to be regarded as genuine stasima or not.

[2] E.g. Soph. Trach. 205 ff. *ἀνολολυξάτω δόμος ἐφεστίοις ἀλαλαγαῖς κ.τ.λ.*, where the scholiast remarks *ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς ὀρχοῦνται.* Eur. Orest. 1353 ff. *ἰὼ ἰὼ φίλαι, κτύπον ἐγείρετε, κτύπον καὶ βοάν κ.τ.λ.*

[3] Septem 417 ff. Cp. Aesch. Pers. 694–702, Choeph. 152–162, Prom. 687–695; Soph. Phil. 391–402; Eur. Hel. 515–527, Hipp. 362–372, Hec. 1023–1034, El. 585–595, &c.

[4] Aristot. Poet. c. 12 *κόμμος δὲ θρῆνος κοινὸς χοροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς.*

of the chief mourners, the attendant women join in an outburst of sympathetic grief[1]. The whole episode bears a close resemblance to one of the tragic dirges, in which the utterances of the actors were also balanced by the responsive cries of the chorus.

Originally the 'commus' was confined to lamentations over the dead, and would form a frequent and impressive conclusion to the old lyrical type of tragedy. Examples of these 'dirges' in the proper sense of the word are not uncommon in the extant dramas. The mourning for the supposed death of Orestes in the middle of the Electra, and that for Oedipus at the end of the Oedipus Coloneus, are well-known instances[2]. In the Supplices of Euripides, also, the dirge is employed with powerful effect, when the sons of the seven chieftains, standing upon the stage, utter their lamentations over the dead, amid the responses of the mothers from the orchestra[3]. But by the fifth century the form of the 'commus' had been extended beyond its original usage to any scene in which deep emotion was to be expressed; and it is in this way that it is generally employed by the three great poets. When the passions have risen to a higher pitch than usual, the ordinary speech of the dialogue is discarded, and the actors join with the chorus in one of these musical passages, of which the effect is intensely impressive. The dire forebodings of Cassandra, uttered amidst the tremulous comments of the Argive elders, offer perhaps the finest example of a 'commus' in all Greek tragedy[4]. The form is also sometimes used, especially by Euripides, merely for the sake of variety and musical effect, in cases where there is no great stress of emotion. Thus the discussion between Ion and the maidens concerning the mode of procedure at the Delphic temple, though differing but little in point of tone from the ordinary dialogue, is nevertheless thrown into a lyrical shape[5].

The structure of the 'commus' admits of the greatest variety. In the earlier instances only a single actor is opposed to the

[1] Iliad 24. 718-776. [2] El. 824 ff., Oed. Col. 1670 ff.
[3] Suppl. 1123 ff. [4] Agam. 1072 ff. [5] Ion 219 ff.

chorus; later on two, and even three, take part in the performance[1]. Sometimes, again, both actors and chorus sing; at other times the songs of the one side are balanced by the speech or recitative of the other. In Aeschylus the singing is mostly confined to the chorus, and the replies of the actors are usually written in iambics or anapaests[2]. In Sophocles and Euripides, on the other hand, the ordinary form of the 'commus' is a joint song by actors and chorus[3]. Whether, in these dialogues, the chorus was represented by the whole of its members, or only by a few, there is no evidence to show[4].

[1] In Aeschylus the commus is almost invariably confined to a single actor and the chorus. The only exception is in Choeph. 315 ff. (Orestes, Electra, and chorus). In Sophocles two actors are employed quite as frequently as one (Aj. 348 ff., Ant. 1261 ff., Oed. Col. 117 ff., 833 ff., 1447 ff., 1670 ff.); and three actors appear in Oed. Tyr. 649 ff. (Oedipus, Creon, Jocasta, and chorus), and in El. 1398 ff. (Electra, Clytaemnestra, Orestes, and chorus). In Euripides, on the other hand, the commus is again mostly limited to one actor; though two are used in Med. 131 ff., Heracleid. 73 ff., Ion 747 ff., and Hec. 681 ff.; and in Suppl. 1123 ff. the part of the actors is taken by the seven sons of the chieftains. But in Euripides the size and importance of the commus is much reduced, its place being taken, to a large extent, by songs confined to the actors and the stage.

[2] The exceptions are Suppl. 836 ff., Sept. 960 ff., Pers. 930 ff., Agam. 1114 ff., and Choeph. 315 ff., where the speeches of the actors, as well as those of the chorus, are lyrical in form, and intended to be sung.

[3] In the following commi, however, iambics or anapaests are opposed to the lyrics—Soph. Aj. 348 ff., 879 ff., El. 1398 ff., Oed. Tyr. 649 ff., 1313 ff., Oed. Col. 833 ff., 1447 ff., Ant. 1261 ff., Phil. 135 ff.; Eur. Med. 131 ff., Hipp. 565 ff., Alc. 861 ff., Rhes. 728 ff., Heracleid. 73 ff., Ion 747 ff., Hec. 681 ff.

[4] Attempts have been made to solve this question by the passage in Aristot. Poet. c. 12 *μέρη δὲ τραγῳδίας . . . πρόλογος, ἐπεισόδιον, ἔξοδος, χορικόν· καὶ τούτου τὸ μὲν πάροδος τὸ δὲ στάσιμον. κοινὰ μὲν ἁπάντων ταῦτα, ἴδια δὲ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ κόμμοι.* The difficulty is in the meaning of *ἁπάντων*. Some scholars understand *ἁπάντων* (*χορευτῶν*), and infer that while the parodi and stasima were given by the whole chorus, the stage lyrics and commi were sung by individuals or sections (*ἴδια*). But (1) the choreutae had nothing to do with the stage lyrics, (2) the proposed meaning of *ἴδια* is very doubtful, (3) if, as seems probable, *ταῦτα* refers to the prologue, &c., as well as to the choral odes, it is untrue to say that the prologue, &c., were performed by the whole chorus.

Another suggestion is to understand *ἁπάντων* (*δραμάτων*), i. e. tragedy, comedy, and satyric plays; the meaning being then that while dialogue and choral ode are found in all kinds of drama, *τὰ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς* and *κόμμοι* are peculiar to tragedy. But the obvious objection to this interpretation is that stage lyrics and duets between chorus and stage are of frequent occurrence in comedy. It seems best therefore to understand *ἁπάντων* (*τραγικῶν δραμάτων*), by which we get a sense that is consistent with the facts. Every tragedy has dialogues and choral odes; but in many tragedies of Aeschylus and

Lastly we come to the lyrics sung by the actors alone. The growth of these 'stage lyrics,' as they were called, is closely connected with the decline of the chorus[1]. Originally the main duty of the actors was to relieve the monotony of the choral odes by occasional speech; and as a consequence the amount of music assigned to them was comparatively small.[2] Even in later times, when their operatic functions had been largely increased, there was nevertheless a feeling that the musical part of tragedy was essentially the business of the chorus; and the tendency was to restrict the singing of the actors to those occasions in which the chorus joined in the performance[3]. This feeling still predominates in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, in which, while the 'commi' occur with great frequency, the stage lyrics are hardly found at all[3]. But Euripides had no such prejudice. His aim was to reduce the significance of the chorus, and to transfer all the interest from the orchestra to the stage. For this reason he treats the 'commi' with comparative neglect, and at the same time, by way of compensation, widely extends the use of the stage lyrics, in which the chorus had no concern[4].

Sophocles there are no *τὰ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς*, while in one of Euripides—the Phoenissae—there is no *κόμμος*.

[1] That the phrase *τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς* (see the previous note) meant 'songs by the actors' is proved by the following passages. Aristot. Problem. 19. 15 *τὸ δ' αὐτὸ αἴτιον καὶ διότι τὰ μὲν ἀπὸ σκηνῆς οὐκ ἀντίστροφα, τὰ δὲ τοῦ χοροῦ ἀντίστροφα· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὑποκριτὴς ἀγωνιστής, ὁ δὲ χορὸς ἧττον μιμεῖται.* Ibid. 49 *οἱ ἐν τραγῳδίᾳ χοροὶ οὔθ' ὑποδωριστὶ οὔθ' ὑποφρυγιστὶ ᾄδουσιν . . . ταῦτα δ' ἄμφω χορῷ μὲν ἀνάρμοστα, τοῖς δὲ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς οἰκειότερα.*

[2] In Aeschylus, too, even when the actors take part in a commus, it is exceptional for them to actually sing; and their speeches are mostly in iambics and anapaests, and were delivered either in recitative or simple speech. See the previous page.

[3] The only examples are Aesch. Prom. 115 ff. (monody by Prometheus), 561 ff. (monody by Io); Sept. 961 ff. (duet between Ismene and Antigone); Soph. El. 86 ff. (monody by Electra); Oed. Col. 237 ff. (monody by Antigone at the end of the commus); El. 1232 ff. (duet between Electra and Orestes); Trach. 1004 ff. (lyrics by Hercules, interspersed with hexameters by Hyllus and the attendant).

[4] In Aeschylus and Sophocles the proportion of commi to each play is about 2, in Euripides about $1\frac{1}{2}$. Moreover, the commi of Euripides are as a rule much shorter and less important than those of the earlier tragedy. On the other hand instances of monodies and duets between actors are to be found in almost every play of Euripides.

These songs from the stage consist either of solos, called 'monodies' in Greek, or of dialogues in music between two or three performers[1]. The dialogues, like the 'commus,' vary in style, and are sometimes wholly lyrical, while at other times the song of one of the performers is answered by speech or recitative on the part of the others[2]. The monodies form one of the most salient features in the tragedy of Euripides[3]. They appear to have been based, as far as regards structure, on the model of the later dithyramb, and are mostly used in scenes of violent passion, where their wild and irregular metre is peculiarly appropriate[4]. But though they are often written with great beauty and power, their value on the whole is musical rather than literary. Still they were extremely popular in the theatre, and would offer splendid opportunities to an actor with a fine voice. A proof of their popularity is to be seen in the well-known story about Lysander and the Spartan generals, who, shortly after the capture of Athens, happened to be present at a banquet at which selections from Euripides were performed; and who, in spite of their hostility to the Athenians, were moved even to tears by the pathetic delivery of Electra's monody, which seemed to them like a lament over the desolation of the city[5].

§ 7. *The Language of Greek Tragedy.*

The diction of each of the three great tragic poets has been considered in detail in the previous chapters, and it has been shown that their respective styles are distinguished

[1] Photius, p. 274 *μονῳδία, ἡ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς ᾠδὴ ἐν τοῖς δράμασι . . . μονῳδία λέγεται, ὅταν εἷς μόνος λέγῃ τὴν ᾠδὴν καὶ οὐχ ὁμοῦ ὁ χορός.* There does not appear to have been any special name for the other kind of stage lyrics—the duets and trios between the actors.

[2] Instances of lyrical duets and trios are Phoen. 103 ff, 1539 ff., 1710 ff., Hec. 178 ff., Hel. 625 ff., Troad. 577 ff., Hipp. 58 ff. In the following examples the lyrics are counterbalanced by iambics or anapaests—Alc. 243 ff., Herc. Fur. 1178 ff., Ion 1445 ff., Troad. 235 ff., Androm. 502 ff., 825 ff.

[3] Cp. Rhes. 894 ff., Hipp. 1348 ff., Alc. 393 ff., Suppl. 990 ff., Troad. 99 ff., 308 ff., Ion 82 ff., 859 ff., El. 112 ff., Hec. 59 ff., 155 ff., 1056 ff., Phoen. 301 ff., 1485 ff., Orest. 960 ff., 1369 ff., Iph. Aul. 1279 ff.

[4] Yet Euripides sometimes employs them, like the commi, in comparatively tranquil scenes, as when Ion sings a long monody while brushing the temple steps (Ion 82 ff.).

[5] Plut. Lysand. c. 15.

from one another by strongly marked individual characteristics, which reflect the peculiar genius of the writer. In the style of Aeschylus the qualities which chiefly impress the mind are its pomp, and grandeur, and dazzling imagery; in that of Sophocles, its graceful charm and subtle intricacy; while in Euripides the language is somewhat less uniform, and varies between simple pathos and high-flown rhetoric. On comparing these various manners one with another it is impossible not to be struck at first sight with the sharpness of the contrast which they present. But in spite of the obvious points of dissimilarity, there is nevertheless an inner bond of mutual connexion. The language of all the great tragic poets of Greece possesses in common certain broad and essential features which differentiate it from that employed in other kinds of writing, and which it is the purpose of the present section to describe.

Greek poetry, as many critics have pointed out, though unsurpassed for the truthfulness and simplicity of its general tone, was elaborate and artificial in form. It was written for the most part in a conventional sort of diction, widely removed from the ordinary language of the people. When any branch of poetry had once been cultivated with success, the particular style and the particular dialect in which it had been originally composed were scrupulously imitated by later generations; and in this way the various species of poetical literature tended to settle down into stereotyped modes of expression and phraseology, which became the common property of every author. Artificial dictions of this kind, after having been once adopted, were retained in constant usage for many centuries. Take the case of epic poetry. At the time of the composition of the Homeric poems, epic phraseology had already been settled and systematised by long-continued employment; and it is this conventionality of form which gives to the poems, in spite of their diverse authorship, a deceptive similarity. Even at a much later date, when the Ionic of the Iliad and the Odyssey had become a thing of the remote past, every epic still continued to be written in the same antique dialect.

Greek tragedy forms no exception to the general tendency.

The diction of tragedy, at an early period, became fixed in a certain conventional groove, from which it never afterwards departed to any noticeable extent. However much its external features might be coloured and modified by the idiosyncrasies of individual poets, the basis always remained the same. Indeed, the language of the Attic stage is even more artificial in texture than that of the other species of Greek poetry. The sources from which it is derived are more various; and the curious intermixture of different dialects in the same composition stamps it with a peculiar and exceptional character. In analysing its component elements, it will be convenient to divide tragedy into three parts, and to consider, first, the regular dialogue in iambics or trochaics; secondly, the lyrics; and thirdly, the anapaests.

The ordinary tragic dialogue is written in Attic. But the Attic employed is far more archaic than that which was spoken in common life, and recalls an earlier stage in the history of the language[1]. The Attic dialect belonged originally to the Ionic family of speech, but began in course of time to deviate widely from the primitive type, and to acquire distinctive qualities of its own. Hence in the fifth century there had come to be a marked divergence between the speech of an Athenian citizen and the speech of the Ionic tribes of Asia Minor. The difference, however, was not formerly so conspicuous; and the diction of the tragic stage is a reminiscence of that earlier period, and exhibits the language in its older and more Ionic form. It abounds in words, and phrases, and turns of expression which had long since passed out of common use among the Athenians, but were still employed by the other Ionic tribes. If we compare the Attic of the tragedians with the Ionic of Herodotus, the points of resemblance are so numerous and remarkable as to place the matter beyond dispute[2].

[1] See Rutherford's New Phrynichus, and Gerth's Quaestiones de Graecae Tragoediae Dialecto (in Curtius' Studien zur griech. und latein. Grammatik, vol. i. p. 193, Leipzig, 1868).

[2] Rutherford (New Phrynichus, p. 1 ff.) has collected a list of words and forms which are common in Herodotus and the Attic tragedians, but seldom or never met with in ordinary Attic; (1) forms such as κεῖνος, ξυνός, δείδω, δείρω, γούνατος, ζάπλουτος, ζάθεος. (2) Simple instead of compound verbs, e.g. ἀντιάομαι, ὀχλέω, ἱκνέομαι, ἄγνυμι. (3) Com-

But while Attic provides the substance of the dialogue, a variety of effect is occasionally produced by the importation of epic forms and expressions. Tragedy, as we have seen, was in some respects a development from epic poetry, to which it was largely indebted both for its subjects and for its mode of treatment; and the language of tragedy shows traces of the same influence. But the extent of that influence cannot always be determined with certainty, owing to the fact that the Epic dialect was itself an ancient form of Ionic, and must have possessed many affinities with early Attic. When, therefore, we meet with examples of Homeric speech in the dialogue of the tragic writers, it is often hard to decide whether these exceptional words and phrases are taken directly from the epic poems, or have found their way into tragedy as part of the old Attic dialect. Still, in spite of the difficulty of the question, the undoubted examples of epic diction are numerous and varied, especially in the narrative speeches, which are generally conceived in a more Homeric vein than the other portions of the drama[1].

But apart from the intermixture of epic features, the speech of the dialogue is mainly composed of the primitive Attic which prevailed during the childhood of tragedy; and its retention in after times is an instance of that conservatism in Greek poetry to which we have previously alluded. This diction, though antiquated in form, was admirably adapted to the purpose for which it was employed. The idealism of Greek tragedy

pound instead of simple verbs, e.g. ἐξαπόλλυμι, ἐξημερόω, ἐξεμπολάω. (4) Words infrequent in ordinary Attic, as αἰχμή, εὐφρύνη, πάγος, φρήν, ζωστήρ, μίμνω, χειρώναξ, στρατάρχης. (5) Words replaced in later Attic by other words, either of a similar etymology, or of a different origin altogether, e.g. εἷμα (= later ἱμάτιον), πυρθμός (= πύρος), ὀφρύη (= ὀφρύς), βιώσιμος (= βιωτός), φᾶρος (= ἱμάτιον), φυρτή (= τρυφή), δειρή (= τράχηλος), ἀλκή (= βιαιοθεία), αἰνός (= δεινός), λάβρος (= ἀφειδής), θαμβέω (= θαυμάζω), αὐδάω (= λέγω).

[1] In addition to various epithets, phrases, metaphors, and similes which are borrowed from Homer by the tragic poets (see Lechner, De Aeschyli studio Homerico, and De Sophocle poeta Ὁμηρικωτάτῳ), examples of Homeric formations are not infrequent, e.g. πωλεύμεναι (Prom. 645), ἐσσύθη (Aj. 294), εἴν (Antig. 1241), πτόλις (Sept. 6, Eum. 9 &c.), μέσσος (Oed. Col. 1247, &c.), ὑπαί (Agam. 892 &c.), ὕμμε (Eum. 620), ἠδέ (Choeph. 1025, &c.), ἀμός (Soph. El. 279).

required a corresponding elevation and dignity of language. The epic style, pure and simple, would have been too remote from daily usage to be serviceable on the stage. The old-fashioned Attic possessed all the needful qualities. While so far akin to the language of the people as to appear natural and plausible in a dramatic action, its archaic character invested it with a certain venerable dignity which was impressive and appropriate in the mouths of gods and heroes[1].

The lyrical part of tragedy, to which we come next, was written in a special diction of its own, of which the origin has already been explained in the course of the first chapter[2]. It was there pointed out that the drama in its earliest shape was merely a kind of chorus, and that choral poetry was first brought to perfection by the Dorians of the seventh century, whose compositions henceforth became the models for the rest of Greece. The old Attic poets, in endeavouring to improve the character of their lyrical tragedies, naturally began to copy the Doric masterpieces, and in so doing they followed the usual Greek practice and adopted the Doric dialect at the same time. The custom thus established was never afterwards discontinued, and the choruses of Attic tragedy came to be permanently associated with a Doric style of diction. Nor was that diction confined solely to the regular odes; the whole of the musical part of the drama, including the monodies and lyrical dialogues, conformed more or less closely to the same general type.

The language used by the Doric poets in their choral writings was not, however, a language spoken by any single tribe of Dorians, but a conventional diction, based on the amalgamation

[1] Cp. the remarks of Aristotle (Poet. c. 22) on tragic diction, λέξεως δὲ ἀρετὴ σαφῆ καὶ μὴ ταπεινὴν εἶναι. σαφεστάτη μὲν οὖν ἐστιν ἡ ἐκ τῶν κυρίων ὀνομάτων, ἀλλὰ ταπεινή . . . σεμνὴ δὲ καὶ ἐξαλλάττουσα τὸ ἰδιωτικὸν ἡ τοῖς ξενικοῖς κεχρημένη . . . δεῖ ἄρα κεκρᾶσθαί πως τούτοις . . . διὰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἄλλως ἔχειν ἢ ὡς τὸ κύριον παρὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς γιγνόμενον τὸ μὴ ἰδιωτικὸν ποιήσει, διὰ δὲ τὸ κοινωνεῖν τοῦ εἰωθότος τὸ σαφὲς ἔσται. ὥστε οὐκ ὀρθῶς ψέγουσιν οἱ ἐπιτιμῶντες τῷ τοιούτῳ τρόπῳ τῆς διαλέκτου . . . Ἀριφράδης τοὺς τραγῳδοὺς ἐκωμῴδει, ὅτι ἃ οὐδεὶς ἂν εἴποι ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ, τούτοις χρῶνται, οἷον τὸ δωμάτων ἄπο ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀπὸ δωμάτων καὶ τὸ σέθεν καὶ τὸ ἐγὼ δέ νιν . . . διὰ γὰρ τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐν τοῖς κυρίοις ποιεῖ τὸ μὴ ἰδιωτικὸν ἐν τῇ λέξει ἅπαντα τὰ τοιαῦτα. ἐκεῖνος δὲ τοῦτο ἠγνόει.

[2] See p. 25.

of various dialects, and diversified by the free insertion of epic words and phrases. This poetical and artificial Doric was the original copied by the Attic dramatists. But in adapting it to tragedy they found it necessary to introduce still further modifications, since in its ordinary form it would have appeared alien and incongruous by the side of the Attic of the dialogue. In order therefore to soften the abruptness of the contrast which it presented, and to bring it into harmony with the rest of the composition, they treated it with considerable freedom; the foreign element was much curtailed; all the more exceptional words and formations were carefully expunged; and the Doricism was restricted mainly to the substitution of the Doric 'ā' for the Attic 'ē.' Hence the language of the tragic choruses is far less Doric in tone than the language of such productions as the odes of Pindar; and it would be more correct to describe it, not as a Dorian form of dialect, but as Attic tempered with a Doric colouring[1].

Even in this modified form it is used very variously in different places, the dialectic peculiarities being sometimes more pronounced, while at other times they are so far eliminated that the language differs but little from pure Attic. By these subtle changes of idiom the form of the expression is delicately adjusted to the successive alternations of thought. Where the general tone is most sublime and impressive, or where the emotions are most highly strung, there the Doric character of the diction is intensified; in ordinary passages the Attic again prevails. Hence the lyrical dialogues, which have more in common with the spoken part of tragedy, are as a rule less Dorian in style than the choruses; and the choruses themselves, when written in sober metres, such as the iambic and the trochaic, have a less Doric tinge than when written in dochmiacs and choriambics, and other measures of a passionate and exalted character. Often, again, in the same lyric, the language changes with the mood of the speaker. When the sailors who have accompanied Odysseus to the island of

[1] See on this subject H. C. Althaus, De Tragicorum Graecorum Dialecto, Berlin, 1866.

Lemnos first hear the distant sounds of Philoctetes' approach, the words they use are in the Attic dialect; but as the sounds grow louder and more distinct, their alarm and excitement find significant expression in the increasing Doricism of the verse[1].

Lastly, as to the anapaests. The passages composed in the anapaestic metre were neither spoken nor sung, but delivered in a sort of recitative, and stood half-way, in point of tone, between the exaltation of the choruses and the sobriety of the dialogue. The language partakes of the same character, and is neither as Attic as the dialogue, nor as Doric as the choruses, but combines the qualities of both. At the same time a distinction is to be observed between the strong and the weak anapaests. In the regular anapaestic systems the Doricism is for the most part so slight as to be merely sporadic[2]. The weak anapaests, used chiefly by Euripides, and especially in his monodies, are more lyrical in style, and more Doric in language[3]. All the anapaests, however, whether weak or strong, resemble the lyrics in the variety of their diction, and in their capacity for expressing the rise and fall of passion by subtle gradations in the form of dialect. This is especially the case in those dialogues where the speakers are agitated by a different kind of feeling. For example, in the conversation between Phaedra and the nurse at the beginning of the Hippolytus, Phaedra is almost hysterical with passion, while the replies of the nurse are calm and sensible expostulations; and this distinction in tone is finely emphasised by the slightly Doric tinge which is given to Phaedra's language[4].

[1] Soph. Phil. 202 ff. *προὐφάνη κτύπος φωτὸς σύντροφος ὅτ' τειρομένου του,* | *ἤ που τῇδ' ἢ τῇδε τόπων*, and then, *βάλλει βάλλει μ' ἐτύμα* | *φθογγά του στίβου κατ' ἀνάγκαν* | *ἕρποντος, οὐδέ με λάθει* | *βαρεῖα τηλόθεν αὐδὰ* | *τρυσάνωρ.*

[2] Thus in the long series of anapaests with which the parodus of the Agamemnon commences (ll. 40–103) there are only four Doricisms (44 *Ἀτρειδᾶν*, 45 *χιλιοναύταν*, 47 *ἀρωγάν*, 101 *ἀγανά*). In the parodus of the Antigone there are also only four Doricisms in twenty-seven lines (110 *ἀμετέρᾳ γᾷ*, 113 *γᾶν ὑπερέπτα*).

[3] Cp. for example Ion, 881–922.

[4] Hipp. 177–266. In this anapaestic dialogue the words of the nurse are Attic throughout, while Phaedra's language is interspersed with frequent Doricisms (201 *κεφαλᾶς*, 210 *ἀρυσαίμαν*, 212 *ἀναπαυσαίμαν*, 215 *ὕλαν*, 218 *ἐγχριμπτομένα*, 220 *χαίταν ξανθάν*, 228 *λίμνας*, 230 *γενοίμαν*, 231 *δαμαλιζομένα*, 239 *δύστανος*, *εἰργασάμαν*, 240 *γνώμας ἀγαθᾶς*, 241 *ἅτᾳ*, 242 *τλάμαν*, 243 *κεφα-*

Such then was the general character of the tragic diction gradually moulded by the Attic poets for the purposes of their drama. It was a curious compound of diverse elements artificially brought together. Nothing in modern literature can be cited as in any way similar. We may realise how alien is such a type of diction to modern methods of composition, if we try to picture to ourselves an English parallel, and imagine a dramatist of the present day composing a lyrical tragedy, of which the dialogue was written in Elizabethan English, while the lyrics combined the dialect of Burns with the phraseology of Chaucer. The language of Greek tragedy was not less diversified; yet the general effect is far from being laboured or incongruous. The Greeks, more than any other nation, possessed the gift of using the most artificial forms with an appearance of perfect spontaneity and naturalness. Their genius was assisted, rather than hampered, by the conventionality of the medium in which they worked. In this tragic diction which we have been describing, the various component parts are so skilfully tempered and harmonised, and employed with such instinctive taste and propriety, as to form a perfect instrument for dramatic characterisation; and it would be difficult to imagine any form of language which could adapt itself with greater flexibility to every variety of thought, and every change of situation.

§ 8. *The Versification.*

The metrical forms employed by the Greeks in the composition of their tragedies are far more numerous and intricate in character than those to be met with in any subsequent dramatic literature. In a modern language, owing to the difference of rhythmical structure, it would be impossible to reproduce the wealth and multiplicity of the old Greek measures; moreover, the modern dramatists, in discarding the chorus and the lyrical mode of representation, and restricting themselves mainly to spoken dialogue, have naturally tended to confine the versifica-

λάν, 246 αἰσχύναν, 247 γνώμαν). Cp. Med. 96–203 for a similar contrast between the speeches of the nurse and Medea.

tion within narrower bounds. Even Calderon and the early Spanish poets, whose language is conspicuous for its rich and varied modulation, fall far short of the Greeks in the diversity and copiousness of their metrical systems. Such being the case, it is evident that a knowledge of the ancient dramatic metres is of great importance for the due appreciation of Greek tragedy; but as the subject is far too technical to be treated in detail, except in a separate work, only a brief and general description will be attempted in the present pages [1].

The versification of the ordinary dialogue is comparatively simple. In the primitive drama the metre employed was the trochaic tetrameter — a rapid and lively measure, which was well adapted to reflect the boisterous merriment of the old satyric choruses [2]. But in course of time, as tragedy began to assume a graver tone, the trochaic proved to be less suitable, and gradually sank into the background. It occurs in two scenes of the Persae [3]; otherwise, during the greater part of the fifth century, it came to be practically limited to the conclusion of the play, where it occasionally took the place of the usual anapaests [4]. Euripides, however, towards the close of the century, in his search for novelty of effect, was induced to revive the ancient metre; and in his later tragedies he adopts it with increasing frequency, especially in hot and acrimonious discussions, to which it is peculiarly appropriate; but also sometimes in passages of a grave and dignified tenor [5]. Sophocles, at the end of his career, possibly influenced by the example of Euripides, also begins to introduce the measure into the body of the play, but confines it in every case to a few lines of hurried conversation [6]. As to the delivery of the trochaic tetrameter, there is evidence to show that it was sometimes

[1] Cp. Christ, Metrik der Griechen und Römer; Gleditsch, Metrik der Griechen und Römer (Müller's Handbuch der klassischen Alterthumswissenschaft, vol. ii).

[2] Aristot. Poet. c. 4. See p. 20.

[3] Pers. 155–175, 215–248.

[4] So Aesch. Agam. 1649–1673; Soph. Oed. Tyr. 1515–1530.

[5] Iph. Aul. 317–341, 855–916, 1338–1401; Iph. Taur. 1204–1233; Orest. 728–806, 1506–1536, 1549–1553; Phoen. 588–637, 1758–1763; Bacch. 603–641; Herc. Fur. 855–874; Hel. 1621–1641; Ion 510–565, 1250–1260, 1606–1622; Troad. 444–461.

[6] Phil. 1402–1408; Oed. Col. 887–890.

given in recitative; but whether this method was ever adopted in tragedy is extremely doubtful[1].

When the trochaics fell into disuse, their place was taken by the iambic trimeter, which soon became the regular medium for the spoken dialogue. The iambic trimeter first appears in literature as a favourite metre of Archilochus, by whom it was employed in satires and invectives. His example was followed by a long line of satirists, or 'iambic' poets as they were called. The iambic composed by these writers differs considerably in style and rhythm from that which was subsequently developed by tragedy and comedy. Its chief characteristic is a certain lightness and buoyancy of movement, caused by the prevalence of iambs, and the sparing use of spondees. It is also remarkable for the smoothness and symmetry of its form; the feet are mostly dissyllabic; resolutions of syllables are rarely permitted; anapaests never at all[2].

The tragic poets, in borrowing this metre, gave it a new character. By the more frequent introduction of weighty spondaic feet they contrived to impart to the rhythm that gravity of tone which was required by the nature of tragedy[3]. At the same time, abandoning the studied and artificial smoothness of the iambic writers, which would have been unnatural in a passionate dialogue, they began to permit themselves greater freedom and variety. Their advances, however, in the direction of metrical licence were at first of a very cautious and gradual kind. In Aeschylus the versification, though less strict than that of Archilochus, still adheres to rigid rules. The uniform succession of dissyllabic feet is seldom interrupted, the anapaests and resolved syllables hardly amounting to more than four in every hundred lines[4]. Moreover, the sentences, instead of being variously

[1] See the Attic Theatre, p. 244.

[2] Cp. the fragments in Bergk's Poetae Lyrici Graeci, p. 688 ff.

[3] Pure iambic lines are found to occur in the following proportion in the different writers who used the iambic metre; in the iambographi 1 : 9; in Aeschylus 1 : 14; in Sophocles 1 : 17; in Euripides 1 : 22½; in Aristophanes 1 : 68 (Christ, Metrik, p. 318).

[4] Even Aeschylus, however, in his later plays shows a slight tendency towards greater freedom of versification. Thus the anapaest in the first foot, which

drawn out from one line to another, usually conclude with the termination of a verse; and the same verse, with rare exceptions, is never divided between different speakers [1]. Hence the Aeschylean dialogue, with its sonorous and impressive regularity of cadence, bears little resemblance to the speech of ordinary mortals. Sophocles, at a later date, by slightly relaxing the stringency of previous rules, added to the flexibility of the verse, and succeeded in producing a beautiful and artistic combination of ease and stateliness. In his hands the iambic reaches its highest perfection. The monotony of the rhythm is judiciously relieved by the introduction of trisyllabic feet, and by the skilful interlacing of the sentences; and the occasional division of a line between two or more characters increases the animation and reality of the more passionate scenes [2]. Euripides, after beginning his career by the imitation of Sophocles, broke loose from all restraint in his later plays, and handled the metre with a freedom which often approximates to the irregularity of prose. In some of his tragedies the trisyllabic syllables amount to as many as forty or fifty in every hundred lines [3], and the verses are continually broken up between different speakers. The general result is to substitute realistic negligence for the ideal dignity of the older dialogue; and the gradual transformation in the metrical character of the iambic, from Aeschylus to Euripides, is merely one phase of that continuous gravitation towards naturalism which was simultaneously modifying the whole tone of the Attic drama.

The iambic verse of Greek tragedy, in its highest form, is a splendid instrument for poetical dialogue. In rhythm and

is hardly found in the earlier tragedies, becomes much more frequent in the Prometheus and the Agamemnon.

[1] These exceptions are Prom. 980, and Sept. 217.

[2] In Sophocles the proportion of trisyllabic feet to every hundred lines of dialogue varies from about four in the Electra to about eleven in the Philoctetes. Divisions of a verse between two speakers are never found at all in the Antigone, but become increasingly frequent in the later plays, till they reach as many as thirty-two in the Philoctetes, and fifty in the Oedipus Coloneus. See p. 181.

[3] In the earlier plays the proportion of trisyllabic feet to every hundred lines is about six or seven (Hippolytus 5, Heracleidae 7, Medea 7, Alcestis 7, Hecuba 9, Rhesus 9). In the later plays it is about forty (Bacchae 39, Iph. Aul. 41, Orestes 45). See p. 283.

movement, as Aristotle pointed out, it diverges less markedly from ordinary speech than any other metre[1]; and yet, while possessing this affinity with common language, it is capable of sustaining the noblest flights of poetry. It is one of those versatile measures, which can accommodate themselves to every requirement, and reflect each change of mood, from the sublime to the homely, and from the passionate to the grave, with equal pliancy. The only dramatic verse of modern times which may be compared to it for varied excellence, is the blank verse of the Elizabethan dramatists. The French Alexandrine, in spite of its rhetorical vigour, appears stilted and uniform by comparison; while the eleven-syllable Italian line, with its invariable vowel terminations, has a somewhat monotonous cadence. The Elizabethan verse alone exhibits the life, energy, and adaptability of the Greek. Its history also is very similar. When it appears for the first time in the tragedies of Marlowe, its solemn and impressive march, and symmetry of form, recall the majestic diction of Aeschylus. In Shakespeare it acquires an easy variety of modulation, as appropriate to the freedom of the English stage as the language of Sophocles was appropriate to the ideal stage of Greece. In the later Elizabethans, such as Shirley and Massinger, the tone becomes less poetical, and the metrical form is treated with so much freedom, that the lines are often hardly distinguishable from prose. Here, again, the negligence of the versification is but an exaggerated instance of the same tendency which was noticed in Euripides.

To turn next to the recitative passages. The metre usually employed for the purpose of recitative is the regular anapaestic dimeter[2]. This form of verse, on account of its march-like rhythm, was used by the older tragic poets to accompany the formal entry of the chorus[3]. It was also occasionally introduced by them between the conclusion of a choral ode and the

[1] Poet. c. 4 λέξεως δὲ γενομένης αὐτῇ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὗρε, μάλιστα γὰρ λεκτικὸν τῶν μέτρων τὸ ἰαμβεῖόν ἐστιν. σημεῖον δὲ τούτου, πλεῖστα γὰρ ἰαμβεῖα λέγομεν ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῇ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἑξάμετρα δὲ ὀλιγάκις.

[2] See the Attic Theatre, p. 244.

[3] See p. 355.

commencement of the dialogue, in order to soften the transition from song to speech[1]. But the favourite occasion for its employment is in those lyrical duets where a slight difference of emotion is to be expressed, and where the contrast between lyrics and anapaests, or between song and recitative, is less striking and conspicuous than would have been the contrast between lyrics and iambics[2]. Considered generally, the anapaests belong rather to the choral, than to the spoken, part of tragedy; and it is only on rare occasions that they are inserted in the course of the ordinary dialogue, and even then, for the most part, only in those passages in which the chorus also take a share[3].

While the metres of the dialogue and the recitative are restricted in number, the metres of the lyrical portion of tragedy display, on the other hand, the utmost variety and luxuriance; and the fact is easily explained, when we consider the intimate connexion between poetry and music among the ancients. The lyrical poems of the Greeks were all composed for the purpose of being sung. Further than this, it was a rule in Greek vocal music that there should be an accurate and harmonious correspondence between the words and the melody; and that each syllable of the poem should answer, in almost every case, to a single note of the music. The modern habit of setting verses to a tune of a totally different cadence, and of founding trills and runs upon a single syllable, would have been regarded with disfavour by the Greeks, as tending to obscure the meaning of the poetry, and to subordinate it to the mere pleasure of sound. It follows, therefore, that the metres of the ancient lyrical poetry were practically identical with the rhythms of the ancient music; and the variety of form which they

[1] E.g. Aesch. Sept. 861, Pers. 140, Agam. 783; Soph. Antig. 155, 376, 626; Eur. Hipp. 170. No instances, however, are to be found in the later plays of Sophocles and Euripides.

[2] Aesch. Prom. 124 ff., Eum. 916 ff.; Soph. Phil. 135 ff.; Eur. Med. 130 ff., Alc. 861 ff.

[3] Instances of anapaests used in ordinary dialogue, in which, however, the chorus also participates, are Aesch. Pers. 909-927, Suppl. 961-979, Choeph. 306-314, Prom. 1040-1093; Soph. Aj. 201-262, Ant. 526-530, 929-943. Examples of ordinary dialogue in anapaests, from which the chorus is excluded, are very rare, viz. Aesch. Prom. 93-100, 284-297; Eur. Iph. Aul. 1-48.

exhibit is naturally far more intricate and complex than in any branch of modern literature.

This rich diversity of lyrical measures, or, in other words, of musical rhythms, was mostly borrowed from the Dorians. The various classes of Doric choral poetry—hymns, paeans, and dithyrambs, dance-songs and processional odes—were all brought under requisition. With the exception of the dochmiac, which appears to be a measure peculiar to tragedy, all the other tragic metres are to be found already in the old choral compositions. But the Attic dramatists, in borrowing these different forms of versification, adapted them to the theatre by the same modifying process to which they also subjected the Doric dialect. They avoided the more intricate collocations of words, reduced the length of the individual lines, simplified the formation of the strophes, and contented themselves with a less minute observance of syllabic correspondence between strophe and antistrophe. In this way the elaborate artificiality of the previous choral poetry was replaced by greater freedom and straightforwardness; and the lyrical measures, like the iambic of the dialogue, were brought into more perfect harmony with the directness and the passion of a dramatic representation.

Aeschylus, in whose dramas the choral element is the most prominent, also displays the greatest luxuriance of rhythms. He introduces more frequent varieties of measure in the same ode, and even in the same strophe; and it is altogether exceptional to find one of his odes which is composed in the same metre throughout. In the later tragedy, as the chorus diminishes in significance, there is a corresponding reduction in the wealth and diversity of the rhythms. In Sophocles the logaoedic type of verse entirely predominates over the other kinds. Euripides, also, though less uniform in his choice of metres, shows a marked preference for the logaoedic.

From the brief account of the subject which has just been given it is easy to perceive that the ancient tragedy, as far as metrical form is concerned, was equipped with wonderful completeness for every possible dramatic requirement. For the more stately kind of dialogue it possessed the iambic, for lively

disputes the trochaic tetrameter; the anapaests marked a further rise in the scale of passion; while for scenes of intense emotion an infinite multiplicity of lyrical metres was ready at hand. These diverse kinds of verse were accompanied by subtle changes of language which added to their significance; and the mode of delivery, whether speech, song, or recitative, consorted harmoniously with the successive varieties of diction and metre. If, in reading a Greek tragedy, we imagine to ourselves the manner in which it was exhibited, we shall be more than ever impressed with its beauty and power. The transitions from speech to music, and from music to speech, are arranged with such perfect skill and artistic feeling, that they never seem harsh or abrupt, but always coincide exactly with the tone of the situation. Especially beautiful is the combination of the various modes of utterance in the same passage. When Admetus endeavours to console the despair of the dying Alcestis, when Athene soothes and pacifies the vengeful hatred of the Furies, or when Tecmessa and the Salaminian sailors reply with bated breath to the frenzied ravings of Ajax, in these and similar passages the contrast between the exalted melody of the lyrics, the solemn cadence of the recitative, and the tranquil modulation of the spoken iambics, has a strange and indescribable impressiveness [1]. The same kind of result is often produced in Shakespeare by the skilful alternation of prose and verse; but the distinction, in his plays, is far less striking and diversified than that which resulted on the Greek stage from the manifold varieties of metre and delivery.

§ 9. *Symmetry of Form.*

The feature which most distinguishes the artistic productions of ancient Greece from those of other nations is the perfect symmetry of their outward form. The kind of beauty which arises from ordered proportion, and from the harmonious correspondence of different parts, was an object of passionate admiration to the Greeks, and to attain such beauty was the

[1] Aesch. Eum. 778 ff.; Soph. Aj. 331 ff.; Eur. Alc. 243 ff.

perpetual aim of their creative efforts. The various monuments of their genius which have been preserved—their temples and theatres, statues, friezes, and sculptured groups—all testify to the universal prevalence and intensity of this feeling. Its influence, however, was not confined to buildings and works of art, but may be traced with no less clearness in the statuesque dignity of their literary productions. The ancient tragedy, in particular, is constructed throughout under the guidance of this principle, and exhibits, in the harmonious balance of its general design, the same classic type of beauty as that which we admire in the old Greek temples and statues. The skill with which the various parts are combined and adjusted so as to produce a perfect and symmetrical whole; the convergence of interest from first to last upon a single point; the artistic grouping and subordination of the secondary personages around one great central figure; the gradual ascent, scene by scene, to the climax of tragic intensity, and then the gradual subsidence into a calm and reposeful termination—all these qualities differentiate the Attic tragedy from that of modern times, and invest it with the simple and stately grandeur of a piece of antique sculpture.

But it is not only in the general arrangement and conception of the play that this symmetry of structure is manifested; it penetrates even to the smallest details, and runs through every portion of the work, revealing itself in a constant balancing of part against part, and a formal correspondence of speech with speech, to which there is no parallel in any production of the modern stage[1]. The lyrical part of tragedy, in almost every instance, is composed in this systematic fashion. The most obvious example is the antistrophic arrangement of the choral odes. Every Greek chorus, if of any size or importance, is written in pairs of stanzas, of which the second is an exact metrical repetition of the first. This mutual correspondence is sufficiently apparent even in reading the play; but in the

[1] Cp. Christ, Metrik, p. 604 ff.; Nake, Ueber Symmetrie im Bau der Dialoge griechischer Tragödien (Rheinisches Museum, vol. 17, p. 508 ff.): Martin, De responsionibus diverbii apud Aeschylum; Hirzel, De Euripidis in componendis diverbiis arte.

theatre, and during the actual performance, it was brought into much greater prominence by the mode of representation, in accordance with which the antistrophe was sung to exactly the same music as the strophe, and accompanied by dance movements of a similar character. Moreover, the relation between the two stanzas was in many cases still further emphasised by the insertion, in the more important parts of the antistrophe, of phrases which closely resembled the corresponding phrases of the strophe[1]. The whole performance, with its accurate reproduction of rhythm for rhythm, melody for melody, and dance for dance, must have illustrated in the clearest possible manner the characteristic features of Hellenic art.

The same tendency may be observed in the 'commi,' or musical duets between stage and orchestra. But in this case there is a difference between the practice of the earlier and the later tragedy. Euripides, whose free treatment of the iambic has already been noticed, shows the same spirit of revolt against metrical restraint in his management of the lyrical dialogues. The musical portion of his 'commi,' though occasionally antistrophic, is more often irregular in structure[2]; while in the iambic and anapaestic portions, which were spoken or intoned, there is never any attempt to secure equality of size between the different parts. Formal regularity is purposely abandoned in favour of a more natural and spontaneous arrange-

[1] These repetitions of similar phrases and cadences occur (1) in the beginning of the antistrophe; e. g. Aesch. Choeph. 935 ἔμολε μὲν δίκα Πριαμίδαις χρόνῳ = 946 ἔμολε δ' ᾧ μέλει κρυπταδίου μάχας. Eum. 143 ἰοὺ ἰού, πόπαξ· ἐπάθομεν φίλαι = 149 ἰὼ ποῖ Διός, ἐπίκλοπος πέλει. Soph. Oed. Tyr. 1313 ἰὼ σκότου = 1321 ἰὼ φίλος. Ant. 966 παρὰ δὲ Κυανέων = 977 κατὰ δὲ τακόμενοι. (2) At the end of the antistrophe; e. g. Aesch. Eum. 161 βαρὺ τὸ περίβαρυ κρύος ἔχειν = 168 βλοσυρὸν ἀρόμενον ἄγος ἔχειν. Soph. Oed. Col. 1456 ἔκτυπεν αἰθήρ, ὦ Ζεῦ = 1471 ὦ μέγας αἰθήρ, ὦ Ζεῦ. El. 136 αἰαῖ, ἱκνοῦμαι = 152 αἰαῖ, δακρύεις. Ant. 614 θνατῶν βιότῳ πάμπολύ γ' ἐκτὸς ἄτας = 625 πράσσει δ' ὀλίγοστον χρόνον ἐκτὸς ἄτας. (3) In the middle of the antistrophe; e. g. Soph. Oed. Tyr. 1207 ἰὼ κλεινὸν Οἰδίπου κάρα = 1216 ἰὼ Λαΐειον τέκνον. Ant. 850 ἰὼ δύστανος = 869 ἰὼ δυσπότμων. Eur. Alc. 909 ἤδη προπετὴς ὤν = 933 ἤδη παρέλυσεν. Med. 829 κλεινοτάταν σοφίαν, ἀεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου = 840 ἡδυπνόους αὔρας, ἀεὶ δ' ἐπιβαλλομέναν.

[2] The following commi, or portions of commi, in Euripides are obviously antistrophic in the lyrical part—Alc. 860 ff., Suppl. 797 ff., 1123 ff., Troad. 153 ff., 1303 ff., Hel. 168 ff., Andr. 1173 ff., El. 167 ff., Bacch. 1169 ff., Orest. 140 ff., 1246 ff.

ment; and the change is strictly in accordance with the general spirit of his tragedies.

But in Aeschylus and Sophocles these 'commi' exhibit all the symmetry of the choral odes, and are remarkable examples of intricate correspondence. The lyrical portions are invariably antistrophic; and the desire for uniformity extends beyond mere metrical similarity. When the strophe, as often happens, is divided into a series of short speeches, the antistrophe, in nearly every instance, is divided in exactly the same manner[1]; and the resemblance between the corresponding speeches is intensified by the recurrence of similar words and cadences[2]. Moreover, if the dialogue is interspersed with iambic lines, the iambics partake of the antistrophic character of the lyrics, and the whole passage forms an elaborate and symmetrical scheme[3]. Anapaestic speeches, when they form part of a 'commus,' are treated with more freedom; yet they too are often partially responsive, and approximate to one another in the number of their lines[4].

The 'stage lyrics,' as we have seen, are practically confined to the tragedy of Euripides, and their history is like that of the 'commus.' When they occur in the older tragedy, their form is mostly antistrophic[5]; but in Euripides this arrangement is the exception rather than the rule[6].

[1] Cp. Soph. Oed. Col. 535–541 = 542–548; Ant. 823–835 = 836–848, 849–859 = 860–870.

[2] E. g. Ant. 829 ἰὴ ἔ, *alaî* = 840 ἰὴ ἔ, *lώ*, 831 ΗΛ. ἀπολεῖς. ΧΟ. πῶς; = 843 ΗΛ. ἰδάμη; ΧΟ. ναί. Oed. Col. 537 ΧΟ. ἔπαθες. ΟΙ. ἔπαθον ἄλαστ' ἔχειν = 545 ΧΟ. ἔκανες. ΟΙ. ἔκανον· ἔχει δέ μοι.

[3] Thus in Aesch. Pers. 256–289 each lyric is balanced by two iambic lines; in Sept. 203–244 and 683–708 by three iambic lines. In Suppl. 346–406 the king replies in five iambics to each lyrical utterance of the chorus. Cp. Agam. 1072–1113 (two iambics in each case); Suppl. 734–760 (two iambics). In Sophocles the arrangement is often more intricate, a group of iambic speeches in the strophe being exactly repeated in the antistrophe. Cp. the following specimens (where the figures denote the number of lines in each iambic speech); Oed. Col. 1447–1476 (2. 1. 2 = 2. 1. 2), Aj. 364–393 (1. 1. 1. 2 = 1. 1. 1. 2). Again in Oed. Col. 1477–1504 a group of short speeches is balanced by a longer one containing the same number of lines (2. 1. 2 = 5).

[4] Aesch. Prom. 127 ff., Agam. 1445 ff., Eum. 915 ff.; Soph. Phil. 135 ff.

[5] So Aesch. Prom. 561 ff., Sept. 961 ff.; Soph. El. 86 ff., 1232 ff., Trach. 1004 ff. The monody in Aesch. Prom. 88 ff. (mostly iambics and anapaests), and that in Soph. Oed. Col. 237 ff., are not antistrophic.

[6] Euripides has four antistrophic amoebaea (or duets between actors),

Still, in spite of the relaxations introduced by Euripides, the lyrical part of tragedy, regarded as a whole, exemplifies the Greek passion for balanced regularity of form. The same principle of composition is extended, though less systematically, to the dialogue. One of the best known instances is the favourite 'stichomythia,' or conversation in alternate lines, which was always popular on the Attic stage. This scheme of versification is used chiefly in excited discussions, where the speakers are hurried along by the eagerness of their feelings; and verse is capped with verse, and question and answer bandied to and fro, with the rapidity and precision of a piece of machinery. Often, indeed, towards the close of the colloquy, as the excitement becomes more intense, even a single line seems too long for the impatience of the actors, and half-verse is flung in response to half-verse, with the same uniformity. In addition to the 'stichomythia' there are many examples in Greek tragedy of debates in which couplet corresponds to couplet throughout a regular sequence of questions and replies [1]. Occasionally, too, a striking effect is produced by the systematic alternation of couplets and single verses. In the Prometheus, when the giant Force is exulting in the infliction of the punishment, and urging the reluctant Hephaestus to the work, his two-line speeches are answered in each case by a single line on the part of Hephaestus; and this inequality in length seems to intensify the contrast between the respective moods of the two speakers [2].

When we come to speeches of greater size, the instances of correspondence occur much less frequently, and are confined

viz. Alc. 243 ff., Troad. 577 ff., Androm. 500 ff., El. 1177 ff. The following ten monodies are antistrophic, either wholly or in part:—Rhes. 894 ff., Alc. 393 ff., Suppl. 990 ff., Troad. 99 ff., 308 ff., El. 112 ff., Phoen. 301 ff., Orest. 960 ff., Ion 82 ff., Androm. 1173 ff. In the time of Aristotle the antistrophic system seems to have been generally abandoned in the case of stage lyrics. Cp. Problem. 19. 15 *τὸ δ' αὐτὸ αἴτιον καὶ διότι τὰ μὲν ἀπὸ σκηνῆς οὐκ ἀντίστροφα, τὰ δὲ τοῦ χοροῦ ἀντίστροφα.*

[1] E.g. Aesch. Eum. 711–730; Soph. Oed. Tyr. 106–131, 320–333, Ant. 536–547, El. 875–890; Eur. Hel. 1035–1084, Bacch. 939–962, Orest. 217–254, Iph. Aul. 819–854, Hipp. 1064–1089, Troad. 51–68, 604–628.

[2] Prom. 36–81. Sophocles occasionally employs the same device in a more intricate manner, as in Phil. 639–650, where the sequence is 2. 1. 1. 2. 2. 1. 1. 2.

as a rule to single pairs, instead of being protracted into a series. Still it not uncommonly happens that an utterance of from three to ten lines is balanced by a response of exactly the same number[1]. Even in the case of the long orations, when they fall naturally into pairs, and are spoken in opposition one to the other, there is a tendency to make them uniform, or nearly uniform, in extent. Thus Hecuba and Polymestor, in the course of their debate, both make a speech of fifty-one lines; and Jason replies in fifty-four lines to the fifty-five of Medea[2]. But the Greek poets are far from observing any fixed rule in this matter, and in many cases where we should most expect it there is no trace even of an approach to conformity. In the set debates between Agamemnon and Teucer, and between Teucer and Menelaus, at the end of the Ajax, the respective orations vary considerably in length; and in the celebrated scene of the Septem, which is one of the most frequently cited examples of symmetrical arrangement, out of the seven pairs of speeches only two correspond exactly[3].

The various examples of antistrophic dialogue which have just been enumerated are often combined together into a whole scene of striking, though not perfect, regularity. Instances occur especially in those controversial disputes which begin in argument and end in invective. The debate commences with a pair of long speeches, grave and deliberate in tone; then as the excitement rises, shorter speeches follow in alternation; these lead up to the 'stichomythia,' with its rapid play of line for line and taunt for taunt; then finally, as the crisis approaches, the speakers become more breathless, and vent their feelings in a series of half-verses, with which the dispute

[1] E.g. Eur. Ion 401–412 (three lines), Heracleid. 784–791 (four), Iph. Taur. 783–797 (five), Cycl. 253–269 (eight), 232–249 (nine), El. 880–899 (ten), Troad. 1260–1283 (twelve). Sometimes these correspondences are interlaced, as in Herc. Fur. 588–609 (7. 4. 7. 4), Hipp. 695–721 (7. 2. 2. 7. 2. 7), Alc. 546–567 (5. 2. 8. 2. 5).

[2] Hec. 1132–1237, Med. 465–575. Cp. also Ant. 639 ff. (Creon forty-two lines, Haemon forty-one), Phoen. 469 ff. (Polyneices twenty-eight, Eteocles twenty-seven), Oed. Tyr. 380 ff. (Oedipus twenty-four, Teiresias twenty-one).

[3] Soph. Aj. 1052 ff.; Aesch. Sept. 375–676 (where the length of the speeches is as follows, 22–20, 15–15, 15–9, 15–20, 24–13, 29–29, 22–24).

is concluded. Schemes of this kind are especially frequent in Euripides, by whom they are reduced to a regular system[1]; but they occur in a more or less modified form in the other dramatists.

There is also another species of antistrophic arrangement which consists in balancing a series of short speeches against one or two longer ones. This kind of correspondence, if carried to any extent, would be far beyond the perceptive powers of an ordinary spectator; and many examples which scholars have brought to light are no doubt casual coincidences. But there are certain cases of a more simple character which can hardly be regarded as the result of mere chance. Thus in the Andromache the ten-line speech of Menelaus is followed by a 'stichomythia' of ten lines[2]. In the Medea, Creon makes a speech of eight verses, then comes a 'stichomythia' of sixteen, and then Medea concludes with eight verses of reply[3]. Numerous instances of a similar character might be cited[4].

Lastly, even in individual speeches it is often possible to detect traces of antistrophic correspondence. One of the clearest examples is the great oration of Medea, in which she unfolds for the first time her plans of vengeance. The speech falls into two parts. In the first, after a preliminary couplet, she proceeds to reveal her various purposes in four stanzas of five lines each. Then comes a pause and an exclamation of doubt. Then she breaks off afresh, with new suggestions and designs, which are contained in three stanzas of three lines each. Then follows an outburst of furious indignation, in a sentence of six lines; and the speech concludes with another series of three-line stanzas, filled with self-exhortations. The arrangement is too systematic to be merely accidental, and has a fine rhetorical impressiveness. The succession of uniform

[1] There is a good example of such a debate in Phoen. 446 ff.

[2] Androm. 425–444.

[3] Med. 316–347.

[4] Thus in Iph. Taur. 1302 1326 the passage of twenty-five lines is divided into five groups (5 = 2. 2. 1 = 5 = 1. 1 1. 1 = 3. 2). In Hec. 402–437 there is first a speech of twelve lines, then a stichomythia of twelve lines, then the dialogue takes a fresh turn, and a stichomythia of six lines is followed by a speech of six lines (12 = 12 × 1, 6 × 1 = 6).

periods, following one another like stroke upon stroke, reflects the inexorable fixity of her hatred; while the change of structure, and the more rapid movement, in the latter part of the speech, correspond exactly with the sudden alteration in her thoughts[1].

Instances of a less intricate kind, where a speech is simply divided into two equal and responsive portions, are comparatively frequent. We may mention, as a specimen, one of the speeches of Orestes in the Iphigeneia, where, out of the twelve lines which it contains, the first six are devoted to a protest against the sacrifice of Pylades, the remaining six to the offer of himself as the victim[2].

The above examples show that even in the dialogue of Greek tragedy the principle of symmetrical correspondence prevailed to a much wider extent than any modern poet would care to imitate. But the artistic sense of the Greeks prevented them from pushing this principle to extremes, or from effacing the beauty and spontaneity of their drama by mathematical regularity of form. The tragic dialogue alternates gracefully between strictness and freedom; the laws of exact symmetry, though often enforced, are more frequently relaxed, or even entirely disregarded; and their occasional observance, without forcing itself unduly upon the attention, merely serves to impress the mind with a general sense of harmony and proportion.

Some critics, not content with these moderate results, have produced a more elaborate theory on the subject, and have professed to discover, in the structure of the ancient tragedy, one vast system of antistrophic balance, which they call the 'grosse responsion.' According to this system every part of a tragedy, from the smallest to the largest, answers to some other part in a gradually ascending scale. Line corresponds to line, sentence to sentence, and speech to speech; groups of speeches are balanced by groups of speeches, and whole scenes

[1] Med. 364–408. In many other speeches, though the arrangement is not exactly symmetrical, there is a tendency to repeat stanzas of the same length, e.g. Heracleid. 389–424 (where the successive sentences contain the following number of lines—4. 5. 5. 3. 4. 5. 5. 5), ibid. 500–534 (3. 4. 4. 4. 5. 5. 3. 5. 2).

[2] Iph. Taur. 597–608. Cp. Heracleid. 539–546, Hec. 850–863, &c.

by whole scenes. Out of this intricate series of interlacing relationships, and responsions within responsions, there slowly arises, to the mind that is able to grasp such complexities, a majestic structure of ordered and systematic harmony.

The first impulse to this kind of speculation was given about forty years ago by a paper of Ritschl's on the descriptive episode in the Septem [1]. Then Ribbeck proceeded to arrange the Prometheus Vinctus in symmetrical form [2]. Then followed a long series of papers and treatises, in which the tragedies of the other dramatists were handled in the same manner [3]. The elaboration of these complicated schemes is founded mainly on three principles. In the first place it is assumed that all the longer speeches, without exception, are divisible into stanzas; and this division is resolutely carried out, often in defiance of the sense. Secondly, the passages written in 'stichomythia' are forced into a series of alternate groups, with a similar disregard for the meaning. Thirdly, it is taken for granted that an aggregate of little speeches may be balanced by one or two speeches of greater length, even when the respective groups are separated by fifty or a hundred lines of dialogue. Yet even these three principles, though used with the utmost freedom, are found to be insufficient in themselves, and it is only by a free manipulation of the text, and by stretching out speeches here, and cutting off verses there, that it is possible to attain the required symmetry. Results effected by means of such violence must obviously be of very little value; and the futility of the whole process has been curiously demonstrated in a recent treatise by Zielinski, in which he shows that, if the same licence is permitted in other cases, any ordinary modern drama, such as Schiller's Wallenstein, may be reduced to a shape of equal regularity [4].

Another objection to these vast schemes of correspondence

[1] Jahrbücher für classische Philologie, vol. 77 (1858), p. 761 ff.

[2] Qua Aeschylus arte in Prometheo fabula diverbia composuerit, Bern, 1859.

[3] E. g. Weil, Die Gliederung des dramatischen Recitativs bei Aeschylos (Jahrbücher für class. Philol. vol. 79, p. 721 ff.); Oeri, Die grosse Responsion, Berlin, 1880. For other treatises see Sittl, Griech. Literatur, vol. 3, p. 223.

[4] Zielinski, Die Gliederung der altattischen Komoedie, p. 387 ff.

is their apparent uselessness. No ear could appreciate such intricate connexions, or notice the relation between distant passages, and scenes widely removed from one another. Even when placed on paper, in the form of a diagram, such combinations are difficult to follow; and it would have been useless to expect that they could attract the attention of a casual audience, whose minds were engrossed by the plot and the characters, and who had no diagram to assist them. The authors of the theory admit these difficulties, but evade them by supposing that the whole of each play was accompanied with music, and that the recurrence of the same musical phrases emphasised the structural connexions, and impressed them upon the attention of the spectator. But apart from the fact that a mere instrumental accompaniment would be inadequate for the purpose, the whole assumption is contrary to the evidence upon the subject. Indeed, there can be little doubt, from the testimony of ancient writers, that the music in a Greek tragedy was restricted to the lyrical portions of the performance, and that the iambic dialogue consisted of speech alone[1].

The subject of symmetrical structure is closely related to another very intricate question, concerning the division of the verses in the choral odes. In Greek lyrical poetry the first and smallest combination of feet was called a 'colon' or clause. Larger combinations, consisting of two or more 'cola,' were styled 'periods' or verses. The 'periods' formed the important divisions, being separated from one another by a distinct pause in the rhythm, and by the admission of the hiatus. Hence it follows that the beauty of the cadence in an ancient lyrical poem must have depended to a large extent on the harmonious succession and combination of these 'periods.'

Unfortunately, in the manuscripts of the Attic dramatists the odes are arranged in 'cola,' and the 'periods' are undistinguished. But there is abundant evidence to show that, as originally divided, the verses were of greater length[2]. Thus

[1] See on this point the Attic Theatre, p. 241.

[2] See Christ's article, Werth der überlieferten Kolometrie in dem griechischen Drama (Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München, 1871, p. 603 ff.).

the Medicean manuscript of Sophocles appends to each play the number of the lines which it contains; and the number in every case is smaller by a third or fifth than the actual number of the verses in the manuscript. The notice therefore obviously points back to some older condition of the dramas, when the lyrics were differently divided. Again, the Latin metrical writers occasionally ascribe to Aeschylus and Euripides forms of lyrical verse which are much longer than any to be found in the existing texts[1]. Many corruptions, also, have arisen between successive 'cola,' which it would be difficult to account for except on the supposition that the two 'cola' were originally written in one line[2]. Sometimes, too, a single verse of the strophe appears as two successive verses in the antistrophe[3]. Hence it may be taken for granted that the arrangement in the manuscripts is a modification of an older system in which the lyrics were arranged in 'periods.' It is known, in the case of Pindar and Simonides, that a similar substitution of 'cola' for 'periods' was introduced by the Alexandrian grammarians, and especially by Aristophanes[4]; but whether the manipulation of the dramatic lyrics took place about the same time, or at a later date, is uncertain.

Up to the beginning of the present century the arrangement of the manuscripts was followed in the printed texts. Since that time continuous attempts have been made, both in the works of the dramatists and in those of the lyric poets, to discover the original 'periods,' and restore the rhythm to its ancient beauty. The process was first undertaken by Böckh, in his edition of Pindar, and by Hermann, in his editions of

[1] Victorinus, 3. 3. 4; Photius, 8. 3.

[2] Thus in Aesch. Agam. 717 (*ἔθρεψεν δὲ λέοντα | σίνιν δόμοις ἀγάλακτον*) the corruption of *λέοντος ἶνιν* into *λέοντα σίνιν* might easily arise when the two cola were written as one period, and the words appeared as ΛΕΟΝΤΟCΙΝΙΝ.

[3] Thus Eur. Troad. 316, 317 *γόοισι τὸν θανόντα | πατέρα πατρίδα τε* = 333 *ἔλισσε τῇδ' ἐκεῖσε μετ' ἐμέθεν ποδῶν*. Alc. 244 *οὐράνιαί τε δῶται νεφέλας δρομαίου* = 248, 249 *νυμφίδιοί τε κοῖται | πατρῴας Ἰουλκοῦ*.

[4] Dion. Hal., De Comp. Verb. c. 22 (of one of Pindar's odes) *κῶλα τέ με δέξαι λέγειν οὐχ ὡς Ἀριστοφάνης ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τις μετρικῶν διεκόσμησε τὰς ᾠδάς, ἀλλ' οἷς ἡ φύσις ἀξιοῖ διαιρεῖν τὸν λόγον.* Ibid. c. 26 (of an ode of Simonides) *γέγραπται δὲ κατὰ διαστολάς, οὐχ ὧν Ἀριστοφάνης ἢ ἄλλος τις κατεσκεύασε κώλων, ἀλλ' ὧν ὁ πεζὸς λόγος ἀπαιτεῖ.*

the dramatic poets. In the case of Pindar the restoration has been effected with success and certainty, owing to the fact that, as the same form of strophe continually recurs, it is possible to determine the conclusions of the verses by noticing all those places where hiatus is permitted. But in the tragic poets, as the same strophe is only repeated once, this kind of evidence is unattainable. The editors have nothing to rely on but their own individual taste and feeling; and the uncertainty of such guides in a matter of this kind is shown by a glance at the different editions of the ancient tragedies, where the utmost diversity prevails in the arrangement of the lyrics.

A new theory as to the composition of the choral odes, which, if true, would go far to solve the whole problem, has been put forward in recent years by J. H. Schmidt, who supposes that, in addition to the correspondence between strophe and antistrophe, each individual strophe contained within itself an antistrophic arrangement which he calls 'eurhythmy[1].' Sometimes this arrangement was of a simple kind, a verse or group of verses being exactly repeated; sometimes it became more complex, the first verse of the strophe corresponding to the last, the second to the last but one, and so on. Schmidt has rearranged the odes of Pindar, and those of the dramatic poets, in accordance with this principle; and if his system were correct, it would restore with more or less accuracy the original divisions. But though adopted by some distinguished scholars, it is open to the grave objection that none of the ancient metrical writers show the slightest acquaintance with its rules[2]. The fact, also, that Schmidt has been able to arrange the text in this antistrophic order is not in itself conclusive. There is no doubt that the choral odes, like the dialogue, often approximate to a symmetrical structure; and the fluctuating value of the long

[1] His theory is explained at length in the four volumes of his Kunstformen der griechischen Poesie, Leipzig, 1868–1872; and in a summarised form in his Leitfaden in der Rhythmik und Metrik der classischen Sprachen, Leipzig, 1869 (translated by Prof. White, Introduction to the Rhythmic and Metric of the Classical Languages, London, 1879).

[2] See the discussion of the question in Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 564; and in Christ's article on Kolometrie, quoted on p. 386, note 2.

syllable, which might occasionally be the equivalent of from three to five shorts, facilitates the manipulation of the metre. Nor, again, does it appear by any means certain that these various correspondences, some of which are of the most intricate character, would have been perceived or appreciated by the audience in the theatre, even though their recurrence was accentuated by a musical accompaniment and by the movements of the dancers. For these reasons, therefore, it is perhaps unsafe to regard 'eurhythmy' as an infallible guide in the investigation of the ancient metres, or to assume that the question of the periodic divisions in the choral odes has as yet been finally settled.

§ 10. *The Satyric Drama.*

The origin of the satyric drama as a distinct species of art was explained in connexion with the early history of tragedy, and its leading characteristics were there briefly described[1]. Only a single specimen now survives. But the type of composition is so peculiar in itself, and so interesting as an illustration of ancient manners, that it may be worth while to collect together in the present section some further information concerning its general style and structure.

The purpose of the satyric play was to combine in a single performance the dignity of tragedy and the boisterous licence of the primitive dithyramb. The characters were accordingly divided into two sets, corresponding to this difference of qualities. The sportive element was represented, in the orchestra, by the chorus of satyrs, who formed an essential part of every satyric composition, and gave their name to the species[2]. On the stage, again, it was represented by the old Silenus, the drunken follower of Dionysus[3]; and by various other mythological beings of

[1] See p. 40.

[2] The importance of the chorus of satyrs is shown by the fact that the satyric play was regularly called σάτυροι, as well as δρᾶμα σατυρικόν (e. g. Suidas v. Πρατίνας· πρῶτος ἔγραψε σατύρους. Argum. Eur. Med. Θέρισταὶ σάτυροι). Σάτυροι is the form commonly used in inscriptions (e. g. Corp. Ins. Gr. 1584 ποιητὴς σατύρων Ἀμυνίας). In Horace's description of the satyric drama (Ars Poet. 220–250) the presence of the Satyri or Fauni is assumed throughout.

[3] Pollux, 4. 118. Horace, ibid. 239. Silenus is a principal character in the Cyclops of Euripides.

a not very serious type, from the jovial Hercules, and the crafty Autolycus, to the maimed and long-suffering Hephaestus[1]. The grave and serious element was supplied by the presence of heroic characters, borrowed from the tragic stage, who were expected to mix freely with their disreputable neighbours, and to adapt themselves to their new surroundings, without compromising their dignity[2]. In this rather difficult proceeding they were not always equally successful, and sometimes appear to have descended to the level of their associates, as in certain plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, in which Odysseus and the other Greek chieftains were introduced upon the stage in a state of riotous drunkenness, and pelted one another with various missiles[3]. But in most cases, as we may infer from the example of the Cyclops, as well as from the precepts of Horace, the traditional respect for the reputation of the old mythical heroes was sufficient to preserve them from degradation at the hands of the poet[4]. In consequence of this feeling the satyric drama, as generally conceived and written, was not a mere parody on the heroic legends, but a peculiar combination of impudence and indecency on the one hand, and of dignity and courteousness on the other; and even in its more sportive and lascivious portions it seems to have frequently retained a certain flavour of pastoral romance and idyllic simplicity, which discriminated it from the more everyday tone of the comic stage[5].

[1] Cp. the Ἥφαιστος σατυρικός of Achaeus, the Αὐτόλυκος σατυρικός of Euripides, and the Ἡρακλῆς σατυρικός of Sophocles and Astydamas (Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 963 ff.).

[2] Horace, Ars Poet. 225–230.

[3] Athen. p. 17 Αἰσχύλος γοῦν ἀπρεπῶς που παράγει μεθύοντας τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ὡς καὶ τὰς ἀμίδας ἀλλήλοις περικαταγνύναι . . . καὶ Σοφοκλῆς δὲ ἐν Ἀχαιῶν Συνδείπνῳ. Cp. the fragments in Nauck, ibid., pp. 58 and 161.

[4] Horace, ibid. 225 ff. 'ita commendare dicaces | conveniet satyros, ita vertere seria ludo, | ne quicunque deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros | . . . migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas | . . . effutire leves indigna Tragoedia versus | . . . intererit satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.' On the treatment of the character of Odysseus in the Cyclops see p. 317.

[5] Ibid. 236 ff. 'silvis deducti caveant me iudice Fauni | ne velut innati triviis ac paene forenses | . . . immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta . . . nec sic enitar tragico differre colori | ut nihil intersit Davusne loquatur et audax | Pythias . . . an custos famulusque dei Silenus alumni.'

The form resembled in the main that of tragedy, but the metres were freer and more irregular [1]. Lyrical anapaests took the place of the regular systems in the entrance songs of the chorus [2]. The iambic formed a sort of compromise, in its structural character, between the tragic and the comic mode of versification, admitting trisyllabic feet with comparative frequency, but using this liberty in a more sparing manner than it was used by comedy. There was a distinction, however, as regards the treatment of the iambic, between the lines spoken by the heroes, and those assigned to their lively associates. In fact, the language of the heroic characters seems to have differed very little from that of tragedy; and it was only in the less dignified portions of the play that metrical licence prevailed to any great extent [3]. As for the dances which accompanied the lyrical odes, they were of a brisk and lascivious character, and their general style may be readily conceived from the numerous representations, on vases and elsewhere, of groups of dancing satyrs [4].

The subjects of the older satyric drama were no doubt taken mainly from the legends about Dionysus, the patron of the satyrs, and dealt especially with the introduction of wine among the nations of the earth, and the strange effects of the new gift upon inexperienced drinkers. Such appears to have been the plot of the Lycurgus of Aeschylus, and the

[1] The general arrangement of the Cyclops is much like that of an ordinary tragedy.

[2] Cyclops, 41 ff. Cp. Victorinus, 2. 11. 7.

[3] The difference is seen very clearly in the use of the anapaest, which was admitted by the satyric drama, as well as comedy, into any of the first five feet, while in tragedy it was confined to the first alone, except in the case of proper names. Now if we turn to the Cyclops, we find eighteen instances of this licence (anapaests in feet other than the first); but in every case the licence is confined to verses spoken by characters of the 'satyric' type (Polyphemus, Silenus, and the chorus), and there is not a single example of its occurrence in the speeches assigned to Odysseus. The instances are to be found in lines 154 (4th foot), 232 (4th), 234 (3rd), 242 (5th), 260 (2nd), 272 (2nd), 274 (5th), 334 (2nd), 558 (4th), 562 (2nd), 566 (4th), 582 (2nd and 5th), 588 (2nd), 637 (5th), 646 (5th), 647 (2nd), 684 (2nd).

[4] Pollux, 4. 99 *εἴδη δὲ ὀρχημάτων . . . σίκιννις σατυρική*. Philostrat. Imag. 1. 22 *σατύρων δὲ ἡδὺ μὲν τὸ σφοδρὸν ὅτε ὀρχοῦνται*. Dionys. Antiq. Rom. 7. 2 *οἱ τῶν σατυριστῶν ἐπόμπευον χοροὶ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν εἰδοφοροῦντες σίκιννιν . . . οὗτοι κατέσκωπτόν τε καὶ κατεμμοῦντο τὰς σπουδαίας κινήσεις, ἐπὶ τὰ γελοιότερα μεταφέροντες*. The *σίκιννις* is mentioned by Euripides in the Cyclops, 37 ff.

Dionysiacus of Sophocles[1]. But in time the circle of subjects was extended, and any fable admitted, if capable of grotesque and ludicrous treatment. As for the presence of the satyrs at these various occurrences, it might easily be accounted for by a fiction similar to that employed in the Cyclops of Euripides.

One very favourite source of amusement was provided by the quaint legends about the prehistoric age, such as the theft of fire by Prometheus, the dangerous charms of Pandora, or the folly of the men who, after receiving the gift of immortality from Zeus, carried it home on a donkey, and then allowed the latter to exchange it for a drink of water[2]. Stories of giants and monsters, like Antaeus and Busiris, or of thieves and robbers, like Autolycus and Sciron, also supplied material[3]. The more fanciful and marvellous side of mythology would likewise naturally adapt itself to satyric treatment. Io with the cow's horns, and her gaoler, the hundred-eyed Argus, formed the subject of a play by Sophocles[4]; and a scene from this, or from some similar composition, is depicted on one of the ancient vases, and represents Argus asleep on the ground, and Hermes striving to kill him, but hindered by satyrs, while Io sits watching on a rock[5]. Perseus returning from his wanderings, and terrifying the satyrs with the aspect of the Gorgon's head, is

[1] Frag. Aesch. 124 (Nauck). Anecd. Bekk. p. 385 καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἐν τῷ Διονυσιακῷ σατυρικῷ ἐπὶ οἴνου πρῶτον γευσαμένων τῶν κατὰ τὸν χορὸν σατύρων 'πόθεν ποτ' ἄλυπτον ὧδε ἡδὺν ἄνθος ἀνίας;' The Hephaestus of Achaeus also seems to have dealt with a Dionysiac subject (Hephaestus enraged against Hera, and subsequently mollified by Dionysus with a present of wine). Cp. Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 750.

[2] Cp. the Προμηθεὺς Πυρκαεύς of Aeschylus, and the Πανδώρα and Κωφοί of Sophocles (Nauck, pp. 68, 209, 237). The Προμηθεύς depicted, among other things, the astonishment which the new discovery of fire caused among the satyrs, one of whom tried to kiss the flames, but was warned by Prometheus of the consequences (τράγος γένειον ἄρα πενθήσεις σύ γε).

[3] An Ἀνταῖος was written both by Aristias and by Phrynichus. A Βούσιρις, an Αὐτόλυκος, and a Σκίρων occur among the satyric plays of Euripides. To the same class also belong the Σίσυφος of Euripides, the Ἄμυκος of Sophocles, the Κερκυών of Aeschylus, and the Κύκλωψ of Aristias (see Nauck, p. 963 ff.). This latter play dealt with the same story as the Cyclops of Euripides, and contained a remark by Polyphemus on the folly of diluting wine (ἀπώλεσας τὸν οἶνον ἐπιχέας ὕδωρ) which passed into a proverb (Nauck, p. 727).

[4] The Ἴναχος (Nauck, p. 188).

[5] The painting is described by O. Jähn in Berichte der sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1847, p. 296.

another episode which occurs not infrequently in paintings taken from the satyric drama[1].

The more ordinary kinds of legend might also be treated in a satyric vein, especially tales of love and wedlock. The rescue of Amymone from the clutches of the savage by her lover Poseidon is an example of this kind, as also the marriage of Helen, and the effect of her beauty upon the impressionable satyrs[2]. Sometimes even serious and tragic myths were distorted into burlesque. The legends of Alcmaeon and Amphiaraus suffered this transformation[3]; and in the Theban tetralogy of Aeschylus the visitation of the Sphinx, which had caused all the horrors of the three tragedies, became a subject for humour in the concluding satyric play[4]. Possibly this composition supplied the motive for an ancient vase-painting, which represents the Sphinx as reclining on a rock, while Silenus, standing close by, makes drunken love to her, and endeavours to win her affections with the present of a bird[5].

But the adventures of Hercules were far the most popular of all subjects for satyric drama. Hercules himself, with his hearty and genial temper, exactly suited the tone of the performance; and his strange combats and distant wanderings in every region of the earth harmonised with the rude surroundings of the satyric scenery. Hence numerous plays were based on the successive events in his career, such as his subjection to the caprice of Omphale, his descent to Hades in pursuit of Cerberus, and his residence with the tyrant Eurystheus[6]. In one of the most popular satyric plays of Euripides he was represented as the slave of a certain Syleus, whose house he proceeded to

[1] See O. Jähn, Satyrn und Satyrdrama an Vasen (Philologus, vol. 27, taf. i. 2 and 3).

[2] Such were the subjects of the Ἀμυμώνη of Aeschylus, and the Ἑλένης γάμος of Sophocles (Nauck, pp. 6 and 172). Cp. the Ἀχιλλέως ἐρασταί of Sophocles.

[3] An Ἀλκμέων was written by Achaeus, and an Ἀμφιάρεως by Sophocles—both satyric plays. Cp. also the Ἀθάμας of Xenocles, and the Τήλεφος of Sophocles (Nauck, p. 963 ff.).

[4] Argum. Aesch. Sept. ἐνίκα Λαΐῳ, Οἰδίποδι, Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας, Σφιγγὶ σατυρικῇ.

[5] Jähn, Berichte der sächs. Gesell. der Wissenschaften, 1847, p. 294.

[6] Cp. the Ὀμφάλη of Achaeus and of Ion, the Ἡρακλῆς ἐπὶ Ταινάρῳ of Sophocles, and the Εὐρυσθεύς of Euripides.

turn upside down, terrifying the servants, drinking all the best wine, and meeting his master's threats with a cheerful smile[1]. In numerous vase-paintings, suggested no doubt by satyric plays, he figures as the butt and victim of the mischievous satyrs. In one he is asleep, and they are stealing his weapons. In another he is holding the heavens upon his shoulders, to relieve Atlas; and while he is thus occupied, they abscond with his property before his very eyes. In a third, while one of the satyrs has run away with his mistress, and he is hurrying in pursuit, another satyr takes the opportunity to drink up his wine[2]. These and similar scenes give a lively picture of the humours of the old satyric drama, with the roguish impudence of its chorus, and the bluff simplicity of its favourite character, Hercules.

In the theatrical performances of the fifth century these satyric plays held an important place, one of them being exhibited each day at the conclusion of the tragedies. Though they owed their position largely to the religious instincts of the Greeks, they were also not without use as a relief to the tension of the previous spectacles, and served as a sort of transition to the pleasures which terminated each day of the festival, dismissing the audience in a cheerful frame of mind, like the farce which used to follow the tragedy on the English stage. But in the fourth century their popularity began to decline, and a single specimen at the commencement of the proceedings was considered sufficient[3]. Later on, though still retained in various musical festivals throughout Greece[4], they seem to have lost

[1] Cp. the fragments of the Συλεύς in Nauck, p. 575 ff.

[2] Cp. Hallisches Winckelmannsprogramm, 1884, taf. 2; Philologus, vol. 27, taf. ii. 1-4; Berichte der sächs. Gesell. der Wissenschaften, 1847, pp. 293 and 294.

[3] See the Attic Theatre, p. 28.

[4] Inscriptions show that they continued to form a part of most dramatic entertainments down to a very late date. They are known to have been regularly performed, during the second and first centuries B.C., at the following places:— Orchomenus (Corp. Ins. Gr. 1585), Tanagra (Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, ii. p. 590, no. 22), Acraephiae (Keil, Inscrip. Boeot. p. 60), Oropus (Rangabè, Antiquités Hellén., vol. 2, no. 965), Aphrodisias (Corp. Ins. Gr. 2758), Magnesia (Mittheil. des deutschen archaeolog. Instituts, Athenische Abtheilung, vol. 19, p. 96), Rhodes (Hermes, 23, p. 273), Alexandria (Fulgentius, Mythologicon, i. p. 609), and Teos (Le Bas, Asie Mineure, nos. 91 and 92). At Thespiae the records of their performance extend as

their charm for educated readers; and the Alexandrian grammarians, in their works on the tragic writers, treated them with comparative indifference[1]. As composed at this period, they appear to have often deviated from their original character. The Agen, exhibited in the camp of Alexander, was of the nature of a political satire; and the Menedemus of Lycophron consisted of personal criticisms[2]. Both these plays, therefore, must have had more in common with the Old and Middle Comedy than with the primitive satyric drama. And though Sositheus, an Alexandrian poet of the third century, tried to restore the ancient type, and is praised for the attempt in the Anthology, his efforts are not likely to have been very successful[3]. Among the Romans the satyric plays were seldom imitated, their place being taken by farces of native growth, such as the Atellanae[4].

§ 11. *The Titles of Greek Tragedies.*

The titles used by the ancient tragic poets in the designation of their plays are distinguished, no less than the plays themselves, by their simplicity and general uniformity of type[5]. A fanciful and picturesque style of nomenclature, after the manner of the Elizabethans, was not in accordance with Hellenic taste; and the one or two curious names which are found to occur, such as Agathon's Flower and Ion's Great Drama, if not due to the mistake of some copyist, appear to be mere isolated instances of eccentricity[6]. Titles, also, which

late as the first century A. D. (Corp. Ins. Gr. 1585. Archives des Missions Scientif. 1867, p. 522).

[1] Cp. Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 1155 Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος τριλογίαν (instead of τετραλογίαν) λέγουσι, χωρὶς τῶν σατυρικῶν.

[2] See the fragments and references in Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. pp. 810 and 817.

[3] Anthol. Pal. 7. 707.

[4] Cp. Diomedes, p. 490. 2 'Atellanae argumentis dictisque iocularibus similes satyricis fabulis graecis . . . satyrica est apud graecos fabula.' See also Ribbeck's Römische Tragödie, p. 623.

[5] The whole question of the naming of Greek tragedies is treated at length by Hippenstiel, De Graecorum Tragicorum Principum Fabularum Nominibus, Marpurg, 1887.

[6] The Ἄνθος of Agathon is only mentioned by Aristotle (Poet. c. 9), and Bergk proposes to read Ἀνθεύς. Ion's Μέγα Δρᾶμα is quoted by several grammarians (Nauck, p. 934).

describe the subject of the play, like the Capture of Miletus, and the Contest for the Arms, are scarcely more frequent; and only sixteen examples (many of them very doubtful) have been recorded[1]. Designations of this kind, though useful in modern times, were not so much required in the case of dramas whose plots were all taken from well-known popular legends. For such compositions the briefest distinguishing mark would be sufficient. Hence we find that of the three or four hundred titles of Greek tragedies which are still preserved, all but about twenty fall into two classes—those which are called after the chorus, and those which are called after the leading personage.

Names derived from the chorus are of three kinds, and refer, either to its nationality, as in the Persians, or to its condition of life, as in the Bacchantes, or to its action during the play, as in the Suppliants and the Root-gatherers[2]. This mode of appellation was naturally most prevalent during the palmy days of the chorus, and is adopted in nearly half the tragedies of Aeschylus. But in Sophocles and Euripides it becomes more and more rare, and among the subsequent poets almost disappears. Its employment is generally reserved, in the later drama, for plays where no single character predominates over the rest, such as the Trachiniae of Sophocles, and the Phoenissae and Troades of Euripides.

But by far the most ordinary kind of title is that which consists merely of the name of the chief personage; and the simple structure and concentrated interest of Greek tragedy justified the adoption of this practice. Sometimes, however, as in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, the person of highest rank,

[1] The following eleven seem fairly certain:—Ὅπλων Κρίσις, Ἕκτορος Λύτρα, Ἀχαιῶν Σύλλογος, Ἑλένης Ἀπαίτησις, Ἑλένης Γάμος, Ἔρις, Ὕβρις, Νίπτρα, Ἰλίου Πέρσις, Ἆθλα, Ψυχοστασία (see Nauck, p. 963). The five others are each of them only mentioned once, and their authenticity is far more doubtful. The Κρίσις is cited in Anecd. Oxon. 3, p. 295. The Ἆθλα Πελίου is one of the plays ascribed to Thespis by Suidas. On the supposed Μιλήτου Ἅλωσις of Phrynichus, see p. 44, note 1. The Ἀπόπλους and the Πτωχεία occur in a list of plays said by Aristotle (Poet. c. 24) to have been taken from the Little Iliad; but the words are probably not names of tragedies, but descriptions of those episodes in the Little Iliad on which tragedies had been founded.

[2] Πέρσαι, Βάκχαι, Ἱκέτιδες, Ῥιζοτόμοι.

and not the person of most importance in the action, gives the designation to the play; and in some cases the name refers to a group of people, such as the Heracleidae and the Epigoni, when their fortunes are the subject of the plot[1]. The Seven against Thebes of Aeschylus is somewhat exceptional, the title in this case being taken from the band of invading heroes, who, though they cause the catastrophe, never actually appear upon the stage. But the phrase 'Seven against Thebes,' which was also used by Corinna, the Boeotian poetess of the fifth century, to designate one of her odes, appears to have been a sort of conventional term in connexion with this particular legend[2]; and its application to the play of Aeschylus is not unjustified, since the elaborate description of the Argive chieftains and their opponents forms the central incident of the tragedy.

As regards the antiquity of these various titles, there seems to be no reason to doubt that they came originally from the poets themselves, and are as old as the plays to which they belong. It is clear, indeed, that names would be required from the very first for the purpose of public announcements at the festival. Moreover, records of the different contests, and of the particular dramas which were produced at each of them, appear to have been kept in the public archives from a very early date, and to have supplied the information concerning the chronology of the Greek stage, which was afterwards collected and published in the didascaliae, or inscribed on monuments of stone[3]. Two, also, of the tragedies of Aeschylus are cited by Aristophanes under the titles which they still bear—a fact

[1] Cp. also the Ἀλκάδαι and Ἀντηνορίδαι of Sophocles, and the Πελιάδες and Τημενίδαι of Euripides (Nauck, pp. 146, 160, 551, 589).

[2] Bergk, Poetae Lyrici Graeci, p. 1207.

[3] On the subject of the didascaliae (first collected by Aristotle), and the inscriptions recording dramatic contests, see the Attic Theatre, pp. 59–64. It is difficult to see from what source the information contained in these compilations could have been procured, unless from official records and documents. The choregic monuments would be of little use, since they were only erected by the victors in the contests, and were of the briefest character, omitting all mention of the plays performed. But the didascaliae and the dramatic inscriptions enter into minute details, giving the names and plays of all the competitors.

which proves that the origin of these titles was at any rate not later than the fifth century[1].

In addition to the names of the individual dramas which we have hitherto been discussing, special appellations were sometimes given to tetralogies, or groups of plays, composed in the Aeschylean fashion upon a single subject. Five examples have been collected from ancient notices, the most important being the Oresteia of Aeschylus[2]. Whether these more comprehensive designations should be ascribed to the same source as the ordinary titles may perhaps be regarded as doubtful, though they seem to have been already in existence in the time of Aristophanes, and to have been sanctioned by official usage[3].

In their choice of names the old Greek dramatists were entirely indifferent to the risk of confusion, and paid even less attention than the Elizabethan poets to the convenience of the literary historian. Such considerations hardly make themselves felt during the youthful and creative periods of literature, when authors are more occupied with the production of new ideas than with the record of past achievements. An Attic poet, if he treated the same subject as one of his predecessors, adopted the same title as a matter of course; so that by the end of the fifth century each of the three great dramatists had left behind

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 1021 *δρᾶμα ποιήσας Ἄρεως μεστόν . . . τοὺς Ἑπτ' ἐπὶ Θήβας*, ibid. 1026 *εἶτα διδάξας Πέρσας μετὰ τοῦτο*. Dr. Verrall (Introduction to Septem, p. xxxiii) contends that the title *Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας*, though existing in the time of Aristophanes, cannot have been due to Aeschylus himself, since in the Aeschylean play the city and its inhabitants are never called *Θῆβαι* or *Θηβαῖοι*, but always *Κάδμου πόλις*, *Καδμεῖοι*, &c. He supposes that the story told by Aeschylus is an old 'Cadmean' tradition, more ancient than the advent of the Thebans.'

[2] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 1124. The other four are the *Λυκούργεια* of Aeschylus (Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 135), the *Λυκούργεια* of Polyphradmon (Argum. Aesch. Theb.), the *Πανδιονίς* of Philocles (Schol. Aristoph. Av. 282), and the *Οἰδιπόδεια* of Meletus (Schol. Plat. p. 893 A).

[3] Aristophanes mentions by name the *Ὀρέστεια* (Ran. 1124 *τὸν ἐξ Ὀρεστείας λέγε*) and the *Λυκούργεια* (Thesm. 135 *ἐκ τῆς Λυκουργείας ἐρέσθαι βούλομαι*). The terms were used in the Didascaliae, and were therefore presumably to be found in the official records. Cp. Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 1124 *τετραλογίαν φέρουσι τὴν Ὀρέστειαν αἱ Διδασκαλίαι, Ἀγαμέμνονα, Χοηφόρους, Εὐμενίδας, Προμηθέα σατυρικόν*. Id. Av. 282 *τῇ Πανδιονίδι τετραλογίᾳ ἣν καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν ταῖς Διδασκαλίαις ἀναγράφει*. Schol. Plat. 893 A *καὶ ὁ Μέλητος Οἰδιπόδειαν καθῆκεν, ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης Διδασκαλίαις*.

him a series of plays indistinguishable by any outward mark from those of his rivals; each of them had composed his Oedipus and his Philoctetes, his Telephus, Ixion, Palamedes, and Iphigeneia [1]. Even dramas by the same author often bore names which were almost identical, like the Philoctetes and the Philoctetes in Troy of Sophocles [2]. But the danger of confusion became far more pressing, when a poet adopted a previously existing title to a new subject, as in the case of the Supplices and the Phoenissae of Euripides—two plays which, though differing totally in contents from the respective tragedies of Aeschylus and Phrynichus, were nevertheless denoted by the same appellation [3].

The ancient critics were not unaware of the awkwardness caused by this state of affairs; and in order to find a remedy, and to more effectually distinguish one play from another, they had recourse to various devices. Sometimes they appended an alternative title, such as 'Atreus or the Mycenaeans,' 'the Phrygians or Hector's Ransom [4].' These double designations, it is evident, originated mainly with the grammarians, and seldom with the poets themselves, since they never occur in the didascaliae, or copies of official lists, and are never imitated by the Roman tragic poets. But though convenient for the purpose of discrimination, they were not without certain disadvantages of their own; and as a matter of fact they led in course of time to a new and unexpected kind of confusion. The ancient writers fell into the habit of citing plays by only one of their two titles. For example, though the Plyntriae and Nausicaa of Sophocles are known from their contents to have

[1] Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 963 ff. In later times the number of plays with the same name was much increased. In Nauck's list of the titles of tragedies Οἰδίπους occurs nine times; Μήδεια, Ἀχιλλεύς and Θυέστης seven; Τήλεφος and Φιλοκτήτης six.

[2] For the Φιλοκτήτης ἐν Τροίᾳ see Nauck, p. 283. The extant play is always cited simply as Φιλοκτήτης, without any distinguishing epithet.

[3] The Phoenissae of Phrynichus was on the subject of the Persian War (see p. 44), while that of Euripides is concerned with the feud between Eteocles and Polyneices. The Supplices of Aeschylus deals with the daughters of Danaus, that of Euripides with the mothers of the seven chieftains slain at Thebes.

[4] Ἀτρεὺς ἢ Μυκηναίαι, Φρύγες ἢ Ἕκτορος Λύτρα (Nauck, pp. 84, 160).

been different names for the same tragedy, this tragedy is never once quoted under both its designations, but is always called simply, either the Nausicaa or the Plyntriae[1]. Owing to this practice it often becomes difficult to tell whether a poet is to be credited with two plays or one, and whether such dramas as the Memnon and the Aethiopians of Sophocles are really different compositions, or merely instances of a double title[2].

Another device of the critics was to change the name of a play, as when Dicaearchus transformed the simple Ajax into the Death of Ajax[3]. A third plan consisted in the addition of a distinguishing epithet, and was reserved for those cases in which the same poet had written two plays with similar names. Thus the Ajax of the didascaliae became Ajax the Whip-bearer, to discriminate it from Ajax the Locrian, also by Sophocles[4]; and the latter of the two Alcmaeons of Euripides, which had been entered in the public lists without any distinguishing mark, was called Alcmaeon in Corinth, in opposition to the previous Alcmaeon in Psophis[5]. In many cases the explanatory adjective referred merely to the order of composition, as in the 'first Tyro' and the 'second Tyro' of Sophocles[6]. These additions, like the alternative titles just referred to, are shown to have been largely the work of the grammarians, by the fact of their frequent absence from the official records[7]. They have also, not uncommonly, led to

[1] See Nauck, p. 228.

[2] The same difficulty arises concerning the Μυσοί and Τήλεφος of Aeschylus; and the Καμικοί and Μίνως, Ἐπίγονοι and Ἐριφύλη, Μάντεις and Πολύιδος, Δόλοπες and Φοῖνιξ of Sophocles; as well as in many other cases.

[3] Argum. Soph. Aj. Δικαίαρχος δὲ Αἴαντος θάνατον ἐπιγράφει· ἐν δὲ ταῖς Διδασκαλίαις ψιλῶς Αἴας ἀναγέγραπται. Possibly Νίπτρα, the alternative title of Ὀδυσσεὺς Ἀκανθοπλήξ, was due to the same cause.

[4] Argum. Aj. Ὀδυσσέα, ὃν δήσας ἐμαστίγωσεν, ὅθεν καὶ τῇ ἐπιγραφῇ πρόσκειται ὁ μαστιγοφόρος, ἢ πρὸς ἀντιδιαστολὴν τοῦ Λοκροῦ.

[5] The first Alcmaeon appears in the didascaliae as Ἀλκμέων ὁ διὰ Ψωφίδος, and was produced in 438 B.C. (Arg. Eur. Alc.). The second, brought out after the poet's death, is styled simply Ἀλκμέων in the didascaliae (Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 67), and the epithet ὁ διὰ Κορίνθου must have been added subsequently (see Nauck, p. 380).

[6] Cp. also the Ἀθάμας α' and β', Φινεύς α' and β' of Sophocles; and the Οἰδίπους α' and β' of Lycophron (Nauck, p. 964 ff.).

[7] For the Αἴας μαστιγοφόρος and Ἀλκμέων ὁ διὰ Κορίνθου (both of which

similar results, and become a source of new ambiguity; since it is often impossible to determine whether the epithets 'first' and 'second' refer to different dramas about the same person, like the first and second Oedipus of Sophocles, or whether they merely denote successive editions of the same play[1].

In spite of the various efforts of the grammarians to secure clearness and accuracy of appellation, the carelessness of the ancient writers in the citation of plays is a frequent source of error; and it may be interesting to enumerate some of the mistakes to which they are liable, as a proof of the insecurity of any conclusion founded upon quotations from a lost tragedy. In the first place, similarity of title often produces absurd confusion, as in the substitution of the Rape of Helen, a comedy by Alexis, for the tragic Quest of Helen[2]. Again, in many cases the chief character is given in place of the chorus, or one character in place of another, as the name of the play. The Bacchae of Euripides appears as the Pentheus, the Orestes as Electra, the Troades as Hecuba[3]. This very frequent error probably arose from borrowed quotations, the name of the speaker being mistaken for the name of the tragedy. A more curious kind of slip consists in calling a drama by the name of a person merely mentioned in one of the speeches, as when the Septem is cited as the Amphiaraus[4]. Many errors are also apparently caused by similarity of sound and illegible writing; for example, the 'Melanippe Sophe' of Euripides is

are given without epithets in the didascaliae) see the preceding notes. Another example is the satyric drama Προμηθεύς of Aeschylus, which was afterwards called Προμηθεὺς Πυρκαεύς to distinguish it from the tragedies about the same person, but which has no epithet attached in the didascalic notice (Argum. Aesch. Pers.). Cp. also the statement in Argum. Oed. Tyr. (ὁ τύραννος Οἰδίπους ἐπὶ διακρίσει θατέρου ἐπιγέγραπται . . . εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ πρότερον αὐτόν, οὐ τύραννον, ἐπιγράφοντες), which seems to imply that the epithet τύραννος was not due to Sophocles. Again, in the case of the Μελανίππη σοφή and Μελανίππη δεσμῶτις of Euripides, the term σοφή, which is somewhat ironical, can hardly have come from Euripides.

[1] For the epithets πρότερος and δεύτερος, as applied to the plays about Oedipus, instead of τύραννος and ἐπὶ Κολωνῷ, see the previous note.

[2] Argum. Soph. Aj., where Ἑλένης Ἁρπαγή is clearly a mistake for Ἑλένης Ἀναίτησις.

[3] Cp. Welcker, Die griechischen Tragödien, p. 456.

[4] Schol. Plat. Rep., p. 361 B, who quotes the description of Amphiaraus in the Septem (592–594) as Αἰσχύλου ἐξ Ἀμφιαράου.

ascribed to Sophocles, and 'Oïleus' is confused with 'Oedipus[1].' Instances of this kind occur so constantly, that when a passage cited from an extant tragedy is not to be found in the present text, inferences based on the supposed omission must be received with considerable distrust. Finally, the first play of a triology often serves as a name for any part of the composition, probably because it was inscribed at the head of the manuscript. Thus sentences from the Choephori and from the Unbound Prometheus are quoted as though they occurred in the Agamemnon and the Prometheus Bound[2]; and it is possibly an error of this kind which led Aristophanes to cite the opening lines of the Choephori as the 'prologue of the Oresteia[3].'

After the records of the poetical contests had been collected in the didascaliae by Aristotle and other critics, lists of the plays of each individual poet were frequently drawn up for the convenience of students and purchasers of manuscripts[4]. These lists were sometimes chronological, as is shown by the notices concerning the date of the Antigone and the Alcestis[5]; but in later times the alphabetical order prevailed, being more handy for reference. One of these alphabetical lists of the plays of Aeschylus has been preserved in the Medicean manuscript[6]; and a similar list of the tragedies of Euripides is engraved on the base of the poet's statue[7]. Unfortunately, the old chronological catalogues have all perished, even to the smallest fragment; and the interesting information which they might otherwise have afforded concerning the succession of the Attic dramas, and their combination in trilogies, has been lost at the same time.

[1] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 100; Stob. Flor. 114. 6 (see Nauck, pp. 290, 513).

[2] Hesych. v. γονίας· εὐχερής· Αἰσχύλος Ἀγαμέμνονι (cp. Choeph. 1056, where the word occurs). Aesch. Frag. 195 (Nauck).

[3] See p. 114, note 4.

[4] Cp. Nonius v. sumere (quoting from Cicero), 'quare velim dari mihi, Luculle, indicem tragicorum, ut sumam qui forte mihi desunt.'

[5] Argum. Antig. λέλεκται δὲ τὸ δρᾶμα τοῦτο τριακοστὸν δεύτερον. Argum. Alcest. τὸ δρᾶμα ἐποιήθη ιζ'.

[6] It is given in Dindorf's Aeschylus, vol. 3. p. 9.

[7] Corp. Ins. Gr. 3. 6047. The list is incomplete, and stops at Ὀρέστης. There is also a fragmentary and partially alphabetical list of Euripidean tragedies in Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 992 (apparently a portion of a catalogue of books in some library); on which see p. 281, note 3

CHAPTER VI.

LATER HISTORY OF GREEK TRAGEDY.

§ 1. *Introductory.*

DURING the fifth century—the culminating period of Athenian tragedy—the reputation of the lesser tragic poets was completely overshadowed by that of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, whose pre-eminence in popular estimation is clearly proved by the numerous marks of public distinction which they received, as well as by the testimony of Aristophanes in the Frogs. The supremacy thus accorded them by the unanimous judgement of their contemporaries was never afterwards disputed, but passed into a permanent tradition among the later Greeks. The three great masters of tragic poetry soon began to be separated, in the minds of the people, from the general mass of writers for the stage, and to be regarded with peculiar and almost religious veneration, as models of dramatic excellence, and inspired teachers of virtue and knowledge. The exclusiveness of the homage which was paid to their memory may be traced throughout a long series of references and allusions in the later Greek literature, in which they are always described as towering above their rivals, and forming a select and illustrious class by themselves. In literary criticisms they figure as the sole representatives of tragic poetry[1]; among the orators and philosophers

[1] E. g. Dion Hal., Vett. Script. Cens. cc. 10 & 11; Quintilian, Inst. Or. x. 1. 66-68. Both these critics, in their enumeration of the principal Greek writers, only mention Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides among the tragic poets. Cp. also Dion Chrysost. Orat. 52 (a comparison of the Philoctetes of Aesch., Soph., and Eur.); Aristeid. p. 559 D; Plut. de Glor. Athen. c. 5; Alex. c. 8 (where Harpalus sends to Alexander, who is in want of books, 'many tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus').

they are continually quoted as sources of wisdom and instruction; and books are written about them under the title of the 'Three Tragic Poets,' without any further specification of their names[1]. But perhaps the most remarkable of all testimonies to their greatness is the ordinance which was passed by the Athenians towards the end of the fourth century, in consequence of the licence of certain actors, who had begun to adapt and manipulate their plays for the purpose of stage representation. This process of contamination was so abhorrent to the feelings of the Athenians, that they determined to prohibit it by law; and a decree was passed enacting that official copies of the works of the three great poets should be deposited in the archives; and that for the future, when one of their tragedies was being exhibited in the theatre, the public secretary should attend in person, with the authorised text in his hands, and follow the performance word by word, so as to prevent even the slightest deviation from the original[2].

As a result of the immeasurable superiority of these three poets, the lesser tragic authors were generally neglected by later generations. Some of them, it is true, continued to attract attention from occasional students as late as the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era[3]; and two of them—Ion and Achaeus—were even considered worthy by the Alexandrian critics of a place in their 'canon,' or list of distinguished writers[4]. But with the general public they failed to acquire

[1] Among the works of Heracleides Ponticus occurs one περὶ τῶν τριῶν τραγῳδοποιῶν (Diog. Laert. 5. 87).

[2] Plut. X. Orat. p. 841 F.

[3] Thus Stobaeus (about 500 A. D.) quotes extracts (in his Ἐκλογαί and Ἀνθολόγιον) from Theodectes, Chaeremon, Moschion, Aristarchus, Iophon, Agathon, Critias, Dionysius, Ion, Neophron, Diogenes, Dicaeogenes, Astydamas, Carcinus, Apollonides, and Hippothoon.

[4] Concerning the Alexandrian 'canon' see Steffen, de canone qui dicitur Aristophanis et Aristarchi, Leipsig, 1876. There is no doubt that lists of the chief writers in each branch of literature were drawn up by the grammarians for educational purposes; and such lists are known to have been compiled by Aristophanes and by Aristarchus (Quintilian, Inst. Or. 1. 4. 3, 10. 1. 54 and 59). But there is no evidence to show that they carried with them any official sanction, beyond that which was derived from the reputation of the compiler. Two such lists have been preserved (Montfaucon, Bibl. Coisl. iii. p. 597; Cramer, Anecd. Par. iv. 197), and are nearly identical in contents; and in

more than an ephemeral reputation, and after supplying the contemporary stage with plays, soon passed out of recollection. Hence, of the enormous number of tragedies which they are known to have written, not a single specimen has been preserved; and even the fragments collected by modern scholars only amount in the aggregate to a few hundred lines. With these insignificant materials it is obviously impossible to construct a continuous literary history, nor would it be worth while to endeavour to enumerate the whole of these minor dramatists, many of whom have left behind them nothing but a mere name. All, therefore, that will be attempted in this final chapter is to bring together from various sources any facts which throw light upon the general course of Greek tragedy during the period of its decline; and at the same time to give some account of the more conspicuous of the lesser poets, whose careers best illustrate the characteristics of the later theatre, or who happen to be of exceptional interest on their own account. As for the obscurer writers, their names will be found in the appendix, together with a concise statement of all that is known about their lives.

§ 2. *Minor Poets of the Fifth Century.*

Before proceeding to trace the final stages in the history of the tragic drama, it is necessary, first of all, to mention some of those earlier poets who flourished side by side with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

both of them the catalogue of tragic poets includes Ion and Achaeus, as well as the more celebrated triad (*τραγῳδοποιοὶ ε'· Αἰσχύλος, Σοφοκλῆς, Εὐριπίδης, Ἴων, Ἀχαιός*). But whether these lists are derived from Aristophanes or Aristarchus, or whether other lists existed in which Ion and Achaeus were omitted, is uncertain. At any rate it is plain, from the enumeration of writers given by Dionysius and by Quintilian (see p. 403), that for all practical purposes the 'canon' was restricted to Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Tzetzes (Prolegom. ad Lycoph.) also has a list of tragic writers, in which he gives the usual five, but with some absurd additions of his own (*Αἰσχύλος, Σοφοκλῆς, Εὐριπίδης, Ἀρίων, Θέσπις, Φρύνιχος, Ἴων, Ἀχαιός, καὶ ἕτεροι μυρίοι νέοι*).

(1) *Ion.*

One of the most distinguished of these dramatists of the fifth century was Ion, the son of Orthomenes, facetiously called 'son of Xuthus,' in allusion to his mythological namesake[1]. Ion was a native of Chios, but came when still a young man to Athens, where he resided most of his time, though occasionally returning to his own country[2]. He began to exhibit tragedies in 451, four years after the first appearance of Euripides, and seems to have written forty plays in all[3]. Little is known about his dramatic career, except that he was defeated by Euripides in 428, and that during another festival he performed the remarkable feat of obtaining the first prize both for tragedy and dithyrambic poetry; on which occasion his joy and gratitude were so excessive, that to signalise the event he presented every Athenian citizen with a jar of Chian wine[4].

Ion was a man of easy temper and social habits, and cultivated the acquaintance of all the most distinguished persons of his time. Among his friends were the two poets, Aeschylus and Sophocles; and he was also on intimate terms with Cimon and with Pericles, though he confessed to being somewhat repelled by the intellectual arrogance of the latter, which he contrasted unfavourably with the genial friendliness of Cimon[5]. In temperament he seems to have inclined towards epicureanism; was fond of wine and pleasure[6]; considered that virtue, like a tragic tetralogy, should have something of the satyr in it[7];

[1] Suidas v. Ἴων.

[2] Plut. Cimon, c. 9. That he occasionally returned to Chios is shown by his presence at the banquet mentioned in Athen. p. 603

[3] Suidas l. c., who states that the number of his plays was given variously as forty, thirty and twelve. Possibly the smaller figures may denote the number of dramas preserved at successive epochs.

[4] Argum. Eur. Hipp.; Athen. p. 3; Schol. Aristoph. Pax 835. He must have been dead in 421, when the Pax was produced, in which he is described as one of those souls which had been turned into stars—an allusion to his dithyramb beginning Ἀώιον ἀιροφοίταν ἀστέρα κ.τ.λ. (Schol. Aristoph. l. c.)

[5] Plut. de Prof. Virt. c. 8, Pericles c. 5; Athen. p. 603.

[6] Athen. p. 436.

[7] Plut. Pericles, c. 5 ἀλλ' Ἴωνα μέν, ὥσπερ τραγικὴν διδασκαλίαν, ἀξιοῦντα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἔχειν τι πάντως καὶ σατυρικὸν μέρος, ἐῶμεν.

and summed up the duties of life in the maxim, 'drink, play, and be just[1].'

Apart from his position in the history of tragedy he has a further interest for the modern reader as being perhaps the first known example of the all-round literary man. Before his time Greek authors were accustomed to confine themselves almost exclusively to one particular line. But Ion tried his hand at most kinds of literature. He is the only poet of the classical epoch who is said to have written comedies as well as tragedies; and in addition to his dramas he composed lyrics of the most diverse character, such as elegies, epigrams, paeans, hymns, and scholia[2]. He also wrote occasionally in prose on scientific and historical subjects[3]. But his most celebrated prose work was his 'Memoirs' or 'Travels,' a gossiping collection of anecdotes and reminiscences concerning the great men with whom he was familiar. This book, the first of a long series of similar compositions, must have been a valuable storehouse of attractive information of the lighter kind; and the long fragment preserved by Athenaeus, describing the dinner-party at Chios, and the conversation and social characteristics of Sophocles, is of extreme interest, and makes us regret the disappearance of the rest of the work[4].

His tragedies, as we have seen, obtained a place in the 'canon,' and were commented upon by several grammarians[5]. Unfortunately, the fragments are too trifling and insignificant to

[1] Frag. 1 (Bergk, p. 578) *πίνειν καὶ παίζειν καὶ τὰ δίκαια φρονεῖν*. Cp. frag. 2 *πίνωμεν, παίζωμεν, ἴτω διὰ νυκτὸς ἀοιδή, | ὀρχείσθω τις· ἐκὼν δ' ἄρχε φιλοφροσύνης. | ὄντινα δ' εὐειδὴς μίμνει θήλεια πάρευνος, | κεῖνος τῶν ἄλλων κυδρότερον πίεται.*

[2] Schol. Aristoph. Pax 835.

[3] Ibid. (*ἔγραψε*) *καὶ καταλογάδην τὸν πρεσβευτικὸν λεγόμενον, ὃν νόθον ἀξιοῦσιν εἶναί τινες καὶ οὐχὶ αὐτοῦ. φέρεται δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ κτίσις* (probably *Χίου κτίσις*, and the same work as his *συγγραφή*, from which Pausanias 7. 4. 6 quotes an account of the birth of Chios the son of Poseidon) *καὶ κοσμολογικός.*

[4] Athen. p. 603, who quotes the work under the title *ἐπιδημίαι*. Cp. Pollux, 2. 88 *Ἴων ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ συνεκδημητικῷ*. Probably the *ὑπομνήματα* mentioned among his writings by Schol. Aristoph. Pax 835 was the same work. It was from this source that Plutarch appears to have taken his story about Aeschylus at the Isthmian Games (p. 57, note 4).

[5] By Aristarchus and Didymus (Athen. p. 634), Euigenes (id. p. 436), and the philosopher Arcesilaus (Diog. Laert. 4. 31). A book was written about him by Baton of Sinope (Athen. p. 436).

convey any idea of his general manner[1]. But considerable portions of his lyrical poems have been preserved, and are written in a pleasant and flowing style, though without much individuality[2]. His dramas seem to have been of the same character, and to have been distinguished for elegance and finish, rather than for genius. No innovations or novel conceptions in dramatic writing are associated with his name. Longinus, in criticising his plays, admits that they are faultless in style, and uniformly graceful and attractive, while greater poets such as Sophocles alternate between bursts of dazzling splendour and descents into comparative tameness. But is there any one, he asks, who would not prefer a single play of Sophocles to the entire works of Ion[3]?

(2) *Achaeus.*

Achaeus of Eretria, the son of Pythodorus or Pythodorides, was another of those foreign Greeks who migrated to Athens, and devoted themselves to tragic poetry[4]. He was born in 484, and began to exhibit in 447, not many years after Ion of Chios; but though he is said, according to some accounts, to have produced forty-four plays, he only obtained a single victory[5]. His death, the exact date of which is unknown, must at any rate have taken place before the production of the Frogs in 405, since his name is not included in the list of living poets there given. He, too, was placed in the Alexandrian canon, and his dramas were edited by at least one commentator[6]; but considering his reputation, singularly little is known about his works[7]. His chief merit lay in satyric drama, in which he was regarded by some critics as second only to Aeschylus[8]; and it is probable that he obtained his place in the canon more as a satyric poet

[1] For the fragments see Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. pp. 732-746. He is twice parodied by Aristophanes (Ran. 706, 1425).

[2] Bergk, Poet. Lyr. Gr. pp. 577-582.

[3] Longinus, de Sublim. c. 33.

[4] Suidas v. Ἀχαιός.

[5] Suidas l. c., who states that the number of his plays was given variously as forty-four, thirty, or twenty-four.

[6] Viz. Didymus (Athen. p. 689).

[7] For the fragments see Nauck, pp. 746-760.

[8] Diog. Laert. 2. 133.

than as a writer of tragedies[1]. His diction is described as graceful, but somewhat obscure and enigmatical[2]. One of his lines was copied by Euripides, and he is twice parodied in the extant plays of Aristophanes[3].

(3) *Agathon.*

Agathon, the son of Tisamenus[4], though not included in the canon, is far better known from contemporary records than Achaeus, and appears to have been more widely celebrated. He belongs to a later generation, and was born probably about 446[5]. In 416 he won his first tragic victory at the Lenaean festival, and the banquet given in honour of his success forms the scene of Plato's Symposium[6]. Nothing further is known about his career at Athens, or the number of plays which he exhibited there. Some time before the year 406 he retired, with his friend Pausanias, to the court of Archelaus in Macedon, where he continued to reside until his death[7].

[1] The popularity of his satyric plays caused them to be preserved in larger numbers than usual; and out of the nineteen dramas of his composition which are mentioned by the grammarians no less than six belong to this class, viz. the Αἴθων, Ἀλκμέων, Ἥφαιστος, Ἶρις, Ὀμφάλη, Λίνος.

[2] Athen. p. 451.

[3] Athen. p. 270 ἐν κενῇ γὰρ γαστρὶ τῶν καλῶν ἔρως | οὐκ ἔστι· πεινῶσιν γὰρ ἡ Κύπρις πικρά, Ἀχαιός φησιν ἐν Αἴθωνι σατυρικῷ· παρ' οὗ ὁ σοφὸς Εὐριπίδης λαβών, ἔφη· Ἐν πλησμονῇ τοι Κύπρις, ἐν πεινῶντι δ' οὔ. Aristoph. Ran. 184, Vesp. 1081 (Nauck, pp. 749, 753).

[4] Cramer, Anecd. Graec. 4. 269.

[5] Aelian (Var. Hist. 13. 4), in recounting a story about Agathon and Euripides at the court of Archelaus, says that Agathon was then about forty. As Euripides retired to Macedon about 408, and died in the beginning of 406, the birth of Agathon must have been not later, and not much earlier, than 446. Cp. Plat. Symp. 198 A, where he is described as still a νεανίσκος in 416.

[6] Plat. Symp. 173 A; Athen. p. 217. There is a difficulty in Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 32, where it is said that Agathon began to exhibit plays only *three* years before the production of the Thesmophoriazusae in 411 (οὐ πάλαι ἤρξατο διδάσκειν, ἀλλὰ τρισὶ πρὸ τούτων ἔτεσιν). Some scholars emend to πέντε, others suppose that he began to exhibit at the *City Dionysia*, as opposed to the Lenaea, in 414.

[7] He cannot have gone to Macedon before 411, the date of the Thesmophoriazusae, in which he is represented as still in Athens. On the other hand he must have retired before 406, the year of Euripides' death (Aelian, Var. Hist. 13. 4). In Plat. Symp. 172 C Apollodorus, who is supposed to be speaking during the lifetime of Socrates (he died in 399), refers to Agathon as having been absent from Athens for 'many years.' In Aristoph. Ran. 85 (produced in 405) he is said to have retired ἐς μακάρων εὐωχίαν—an obscure expression, which, as the scholiast remarks, may refer, either to his death, or to his

Though distinguished among his contemporaries for his personal beauty and natural gifts[1], Agathon was not exempt from certain minor vices of character, and his foppishness and effeminacy made him a favourite butt of Aristophanes. In the Thesmophoriazusae, where he figures conspicuously, he is represented as apologising for the care which he bestows upon his person, by explaining that it is impossible for a man to write elegant poetry, unless his figure and costume are equally elegant. In the same play he is described as fair and smooth-shaven, with a melodious voice, and a soft and buxom figure; and his appearance is so feminine as to deceive Mnesilochus, who takes him for a girl[2]. But in spite of these foibles he must have been a man of genuine worth, if we may judge from the remark of Antiphon, who, after he had been condemned to death by the Athenians, and when the speech which he made in his defence had been praised by Agathon, replied that he thought more of the commendation of a single upright man than of the censure of the whole multitude[3]. Even Aristophanes, writing after his departure for Macedonia, speaks of him as a 'good poet,' whose absence was 'regretted by all his friends[4].'

In his dramatic writings he would seem to have been an author of some originality, and various novelties are ascribed to him. He was the first to step beyond the sacred precincts of mythology and history, and to write a tragedy on a purely fictitious subject[5]. He was likewise the first to sever the choral odes from all connexion with the plot, and to convert them into professed interludes[6]. Again, in one of his composi-

departure to the court of Archelaus. On his connexion with Pausanias, who accompanied him to Macedon (Anecd. Oxon. 4. p. 269), see Plat. Protag. 315 D.

[1] Plat. ibid. *καλός τε κἀγαθὸς τὴν φύσιν, τὴν δ' οὖν ἰδέαν πάνυ καλός.*

[2] Aristoph. Thesm. 130 ff.

[3] Aristot. Eth. Eudem 3. 5.

[4] Ran. 83.

[5] Aristot. Poet. c. 9 *οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις ἐνίαις μὲν ἓν ἢ δύο τῶν γνωρίμων ἐστὶν ὀνομάτων, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πεποιημένα, ἐν ἐνίαις δὲ οὐδ' ἕν, οἷον ἐν τῷ Ἀγάθωνος Ἄνθει· ὁμοίως γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ τά τε πράγματα καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα πεποίηται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον εὐφραίνει.*

[6] Ibid. c. 18 *τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς τὰ ᾀδόμενα οὐδὲν μᾶλλον τοῦ μύθου ἢ ἄλλης τραγῳδίας ἐστίν· διὸ ἐμβόλιμα ᾄδουσιν, πρώτου ἄρξαντος Ἀγάθωνος τοῦ τοιούτου.*

tions he appears to have departed widely from the ordinary Greek methods of dramatic construction, and to have endeavoured to compress a long series of events within the compass of a single performance, after the manner of an Elizabethan chronicle play[1]. In music, also, he established a new precedent, by employing the chromatic scale on the tragic stage[2]. But in spite of the ambitious character of his work he lacked the force and vigour which are necessary to create a new school of writing, and his various innovations made little permanent impression upon the course of Greek tragedy.

The theory which Aristophanes puts in his mouth concerning the intimate connexion between a poet's costume and his verses seems to have been fully justified, in his own case, by the style of his diction, which, like his personal appearance, was artificial and affected. His phrases, to use the language of Aristophanes, after 'passing through the melting-pot,' were 'moulded like wax' and 'bent into strange curves[3].' In early life he had been the pupil of the sophist Prodicus, and inherited from his master a taste for concise and sententious maxims, and for alliterations, antitheses, and verbal jingles[4]. His speech in the Symposium is all of this character, and reminds Socrates of the manner of Gorgias[5]. His fragments, also, abound in carefully balanced epigrams, such as 'to make a bye-work of our work, and a work of our bye-work[6].' In an age which admired the writings of the sophists, this artificiality of style, so far from being distasteful, was a positive recommendation, and no doubt formed the chief source of his popularity. His catching phrases were convenient to remember, and well adapted

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 18 χρὴ δὲ μὴ ποιεῖν ἐποποιικὸν σύστημα τραγῳδίαν. ἐποποιικὸν δὲ λέγω τὸ πολύμυθον, οἷον εἴ τις τὸν τῆς Ἰλιάδος ὅλον ποιοῖ μῦθον. . . . σημεῖον δέ· ὅσοι πέρσιν Ἰλίου ὅλην ἐποίησαν καὶ μὴ κατὰ μέρος ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδης, ἢ Νιόβην καὶ μὴ ὥσπερ Αἰσχύλος, ἢ ἐκπίπτουσιν ἢ κακῶς ἀγωνίζονται, ἐπεὶ καὶ Ἀγάθων ἐξέπεσεν ἐν τούτῳ μόνῳ.

[2] Plut. Quaest. Symp. 3. 1. 1.

[3] Aristoph. Thesm. 39–57. Cp. the parody of his lyrics in 101 ff.

[4] Plat. Protag. 315 D.

[5] Id. Symp. 194 E—198 C. Cp. Philostrat. Vit. Soph. 1. 9 (p. 12 Kayser) καὶ Ἀγάθων δὲ . . . πολλαχοῦ τῶν ἰάμβων γοργιάζει.

[6] Frag. 11 τὸ μὲν πάρεργον ἔργον ὡς ποιούμεθα, | τὸ δ' ἔργον ὡς πάρεργον ἐκπονούμεθα. Cp. frag. 27 γνώμη δὲ κρεῖσσόν ἐστιν ἢ ῥώμη χερῶν, 29 ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ ἐσορᾶν γίγνετ' ἀνθρώποις ἐρᾶν. For the other fragments see Nauck, pp. 763–769.

for quotation; and Aristotle cites them with obvious partiality[1]. Hence it is easy to understand that when a certain friend of his once proposed to correct his dramas by removing these various trivialities of diction, the offer was not very acceptable to the poet, who complained with justice that to 'improve' them in this way would be to 'eliminate all the Agathon[2].'

(4) *Tragedy in Families.*

During the flourishing period of the Greek drama, the poet, as we have seen, was his own stage-manager; it was he who superintended the production of the play, made the necessary arrangements with the archon, trained the actors and the chorus, and provided appropriate music and scenery. In order, therefore, to be a successful tragic poet, it was necessary to possess, not only poetical genius, but also a considerable amount of special training and technical knowledge. Such being the case, the composition of tragedies tended, not unnaturally, to become a sort of hereditary vocation, and to be handed down from father to son for several generations. Though literary capacity could not be transmitted, yet the art of placing a drama effectively upon the stage might be acquired by experience. Hence we find that most of the great poets of this period were succeeded in their profession by a line of descendants, who, even if they possessed no great talent for poetry, were often fairly successful on the stage. Polyphradmon, the author of a tetralogy on the subject of Lycurgus, was the son of the tragic poet Phrynichus[3]; and Aristias, the son of Pratinas, also followed closely in the footsteps of his father, and became equally famous as a writer of satyric plays[4].

[1] E. g. Eth. Nicom. 6. 4 *τέχνη τύχην ἔστερξε καὶ τύχη τέχνην*, Rhet. 2. 24 *τάχ' ἄν τις εἰκὸς αὐτὸ τοῦτ' εἶναι λέγοι, | βροτοῖσι πολλὰ τυγχάνειν οὐκ εἰκότα.* Cp. also Eth. Nicom. 6. 2, Eth. Eud. 3. 1, Rhet. 2. 19.

[2] Aelian, Var. Hist. 14. 13 *ἀλλὰ σύ γε, γενναῖε, λέληθας σεαυτὸν τὸν Ἀγάθωνα ἐκ τοῦ Ἀγάθωνος ἀφανίζων.*

[3] Suidas v. *Φρύνιχος* (1). He was third with his *Λυκούργεια τετραλογία* in 467, the year in which the Theban tetralogy of Aeschylus won the first prize (Argum. Aesch. Sept.). His name occurs in the list of tragic poets in Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 977 a, where it is given as *Πολυφράσμων.*

[4] Pausan. 2. 13. 5, who says he was

But the family of Aeschylus was far the most prolific of all in the matter of dramatic composition, and for nearly two hundred years continued to provide the Attic theatre with a series of tragic poets. Among the members of this group who belong to the fifth century the two earliest in point of date are Euphorion and Bion, the sons of Aeschylus, who both wrote tragedies[1]. Euphorion, also, availing himself of the special permission given by law, often exhibited his father's dramas in competition with the works of contemporary authors, and obtained in this way four victories[2].

Another representative of the same family was Philocles, the nephew of Aeschylus—a voluminous writer, who produced no less than a hundred tragedies in the course of his career, and on one occasion succeeded in defeating even Sophocles himself[3]. But his success in this contest must have been due to some casual circumstance, since otherwise he never attained any great eminence as a dramatist. In the comic poets he is the object of frequent ridicule; his name is changed to 'Gall, the son of Brine,' on account of his harsh and disagreeable style[4]; the badness of his poetry is ascribed to the ugliness of his person[5]; his lyrics are said to inspire even wasps with additional venom[6]; and he is denounced as a mere botcher of plays, connected with Aeschylus by blood, but not by genius[7]. Among

buried at Phlius, his father's native city. He contended against Aeschylus in 467 with a group of plays left to him by his father (Argum. Aesch. Sept.), and was also one of the opponents of Sophocles (Vita Soph.). The titles of seven of his plays, together with a few insignificant fragments, are to be found in Nauck, pp. 726–728.

[1] Suidas vv. Αἰσχύλος, Εὐφορίων. Bion's name is doubtful, the MSS. varying between Βιών, Εὐβίων, and Εὐαίων. Euphorion won the first prize in 431, defeating both Sophocles and Euripides; but the plays which he exhibited on this occasion were most probably written by Aeschylus (Argum. Eur. Med.).

[2] Suidas v. Εὐφορίων.

[3] Suidas v. Φιλοκλῆς. Among the plays exhibited by Sophocles, on the occasion when Philocles defeated him, was the Oedipus Tyrannus (Argum. Oed. Tyr.).

[4] Suidas l. c.; Schol. Aristoph. Av. 281.

[5] Aristoph. Thesm. 168.

[6] Ibid. Vesp. 461.

[7] Such appears to be the meaning of the corrupt fragment of Telecleides (Meineke, Frag. Com. Graec. 2, p. 366). In Aristoph. Av. 1295 Philocles is compared to a lark, though the allusion is obscure; and in a fragment of Cratinus (Meineke, 2, p. 226) he is charged with spoiling a legend by his unskilful treatment.

his compositions was a tetralogy on the legend of Tereus; and this fact is of some significance, as showing that the tetralogic form of writing was still occasionally retained in the Aeschylean school[1].

Concerning Morsimus, the son of Philocles, and grand-nephew of Aeschylus, little is known beyond the fact that he was an oculist as well as a tragic poet, and that his person was diminutive, and his dramas dull and frigid[2]. To 'learn a play of Morsimus by heart' is mentioned in Aristophanes as one of the most painful of punishments; and the scribes who made copies of his works are visited in Hades with the same penalties as thieves, swindlers, and parricides[3].

Both Sophocles and Euripides left successors behind them among their own relatives. Euripides had a son, or a nephew, to whom he bequeathed his unpublished plays, and who also composed tragedies of his own[4]. Ariston, the illegitimate son of Sophocles, likewise followed his father's profession, though without much success[5]. But Iophon, the legitimate son, was a more distinguished author, and won several victories in the course of his career, in which he produced fifty plays, some by himself, some in conjunction with his father[6]. In the Frogs he

[1] Schol. Aristoph. Av. 281. The tetralogy was called Πανδιονίς (Philomela and Procne being the daughters of Pandion), and apparently contained an account of the transformation of Tereus into a hoopoe. Hence the satirical allusion in the Aves, where the Hoopoe claims to be the father of the Philoclean bird. According to the scholiast one of the four plays was called Τηρεὺς ἢ Ἔπωψ, though the latter title can hardly be genuine. Suidas (v. Φιλοκλῆς) gives the titles of seven other tragedies by Philocles, and his fragments will be found in Nauck, pp. 759-760.

[2] Suidas v. Μόρσιμος; Schol. Aristoph. Equit. 401, Pax 803 and 808, Ran. 151. He is sometimes, though erroneously, described as the brother of Melanthius (e. g. Meineke 2, p. 659), through a misunderstanding of Aristoph. Pax 801 ff.

[3] Aristoph. Equit. 401, Ran. 151. Cp., for other satirical allusions, Pax 801, Plato's Σκευαί, frag. 2 (Meineke, l. c.).

[4] He is called 'son' of Euripides in Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 67, and Vita Eur.; 'nephew' in Suidas vv. Εὐριπίδης (2) and (3), who cites Διονύσιος ἐν τοῖς Χρονικοῖς as his authority. It was this younger Euripides who brought out the Bacchae, Alcmaeon, and Iphigenia in Aulide after the death of his relative.

[5] Suidas v. Σοφοκλῆς (2); Diog. Laert. 7. 164.

[6] Suidas v. Ἰοφῶν. Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 73. He is said to have competed at times against his father (Vita Soph.). In 428 he was second in the tragic contest, Euripides being first, and Ion third (Argum. Eur. Hipp.). For his fragments and the titles of his plays see Nauck, pp. 761, 762.

is described as the only good poet now left, but doubts are expressed whether he will appear to equal advantage without the assistance of Sophocles, who had died in the previous year[1]. These doubts appear to have been verified, as the reputation which he eventually left behind him was that of a dull and feeble poet[2]. A curious tradition has been preserved by an anonymous grammarian, to the effect that he, and not his father, was the author of the Antigone[3].

Lastly, there is a theatrical family—that of Carcinus, or 'Crab,' the son of Thorycius—which achieved some glory in the fourth century, but whose fifth-century representatives would hardly have been remembered but for the jeers of Aristophanes. Carcinus was a poet, and wrote tragedies; while his three sons, 'long-necked dwarfish dancers, mere bits of sheep-dung,' served in the tragic choruses[4]. The whole family are introduced at the end of the Wasps, the sons executing an extravagant dance in the orchestra, while their father, the 'ocean king,' looks on, rejoicing in the activity of his children[5].

Xenocles, the smallest of the three sons, and more like a 'shrimp' or 'spider' than a member of the 'crab' species, eventually became a tragic dramatist like his father[6]. He is described as 'a bad man and a bad poet,' and his name is dismissed with contempt in the review of living writers in the Frogs[7]. Yet

[1] Aristoph. Ran. 73 ff.

[2] Schol. ibid. 78.

[3] Cramer, Anecd. Graec. 4, p. 313.

[4] Aristoph. Pax 781 ff., and Schol. ad loc.; Suidas v. Καρκίνος (3); Schol. Vesp. 1500. There is some doubt as to the number and names of the sons. Aristophanes (Vesp. 1497 ff.) clearly makes them three, and so Schol. Vesp. 1522, and Schol. Pax 788 (who gives their names as Xenocles, Xenotimus, Xenarchus). But Schol. Vesp. 1493 says there were four sons, quoting a mutilated passage from Pherecrates to that effect; and Schol. Ran. 86 agrees with him, giving their names as Xenocles, Xenotimus, Xenoclitus, and Datis. Cp. also Schol. Pax 289, where Datis the tragic poet is said to have been the son of Carcinus.

[5] Aristoph. Vesp. 1497 ff. Cp. Pax 864, where the sons are called 'tops,' because of their dancing powers.

[6] Aristoph. Pax 1508 ff.; Schol. Nub. 1263.

[7] Aristoph. Thesm. 169, Ran. 86. Cp. Schol. Ran. 86 (where his poetry is described as 'rough and allegorical'), and Schol. Pax 790 (where the epithet δωδεκαμήχανος, applied to him by the comic poet Plato, is explained as a reference to the wonderful contrivances which he introduced into his plays). Two of his lines are parodied in Aristoph. Nub. 1263. For the fragments and titles of his plays see Nauck, p. 770.

even he succeeded in defeating Euripides, and in obtaining the first prize for tragedy, in the year 415[1].

(5) *Other Tragic Poets.*

The families of tragic poets which we have been describing were all composed of men who had devoted themselves to tragedy as a regular profession, and who consecrated their chief energies to the theatre; in fact, throughout the whole of the earlier history of the Athenian theatre the composition of plays was practically confined to writers of this class. But towards the close of the fifth century a new kind of author begins for the first time to make his appearance in the shape of the amateur dramatist, who, while occasionally trying his fortunes upon the stage, nevertheless regarded the production of tragedies as a mere amusement, and as a relaxation from the serious business of life. Poets of this intermittent type, who become more and more frequent in the course of the next few generations, were concerned solely with the literary part of the work, and, unlike their predecessors, must have employed professional services in the actual production of their plays. Critias, the pupil of Socrates, and the famous leader of the Thirty Tyrants, is one of the earliest examples. Oratory and statesmanship were his principal occupations. His speeches, which survived for many centuries, are described by Cicero as vigorous in matter, like those of Pericles, but more copious in style; and Philostratus notices their solemn and sententious tone, and the easy flow of their diction[2]. Critias also wrote elegies, of which some fragments remain, and was fond of posing as a philosopher[3]. His tragedies were apparently of a reflective and philosophic cast, like his orations; and a long and rather striking fragment of his Sisyphus has been preserved, in which he accounts for the belief in gods on utilitarian principles, regarding them as the invention of early statesmen, who hoped in this way to deter men from crime[4].

[1] Aelian, Var. Hist. 2. 8.

[2] Cicero, de Orat. 2. 22, Philostrat. Vit. Soph. 1. 16. 3, 2. 1. 14.

[3] Bergk, Poet. Lyr. Gr. pp. 602–606.

[4] Nauck, Trag. Graec. Frag. p. 771 The lines are quoted as from the

The fragment recalls the manner of Euripides in his sententious moods, though less vigorous and picturesque in language. Indeed, Critias was plainly one of the imitators of Euripides, and the similarity between the two poets occasionally led to confusion concerning the authorship of their respective plays[1].

Meletus, another poet of the end of the fifth century, is better known as one of the accusers of Socrates than as a dramatic author[2]. He is described by Plato as being, at the time of the trial, a 'young man of no great distinction, with long hair, hooked nose, and scanty beard[3].' In the prosecution of Socrates he represented the tragic poets, whose vanity was offended by the Socratic irony[4]. His lanky and corpse-like appearance caused him to be selected by Aristophanes, in one of his comedies, as an ambassador to Hades, sent by the living poets to implore the assistance of the dead[5]. His vicious character, and the coarseness and sensuality of his lyrics, are elsewhere satirised[6]. All that is known about his tragic poetry is that he wrote a tetralogy (the last recorded example of this species of composition) on the legend of Oedipus; whence his

Sisyphus of Critias by Sextus Empiricus. Plutarch and Galen ascribe them to Euripides, being apparently misled, partly by their sententious tone, partly by the fact that Euripides was also the author of a Sisyphus (satyric play).

[1] According to the Vita Eurip. three plays of Euripides—the Tennes, Rhadamanthus, and Peirithous—were often regarded as spurious; and Athenaeus (p. 496) tells us that the Peirithous was ascribed to Critias by some scholars. On the strength of these facts Wilamowitz (Anal. Eur. p. 166) would assign all three plays to Critias. But the inference is very doubtful. Every grammarian except Athenaeus who quotes the Peirithous regards it as the work of Euripides (see Nauck, pp. 546–550); and the style of the numerous fragments is quite Euripidean.

[2] It is doubtful whether his name should be spelt Μέλητος or Μέλιτος, both versions being found. Aristophanes called him a 'Thracian,' though on what grounds is unknown (Schol. Plat. Apol. p. 18 B). Nor is it certain whether he was the Meletus who was charged with participation in the mutilation of the Hermae, and who sided with the Thirty Tyrants, and prosecuted Andocides (Xen. Hell. 2. 4. 36; Andoc. de Myst. § 94).

[3] Plat. Euthyph. p. 2 B.

[4] Ibid. Apol. p. 22 A.

[5] Aristoph. Γηρυτάδης, frag. 1 (Meineke, p. 1005). Hence Sannyrion, the comic poet, called him τὸν ἀπὸ Ληναίου νεκρόν (Athen. p. 551).

[6] Suidas, v. Μέλητος· κωμῳδεῖται ὡς πονηρὸς τὸν τρόπον. Cp. Schol. Plat. Apol. 18 B. Aristoph. Ran. 1301 (about Euripides) οὗτος δ' ἀπὸ πάντων μὲν φέρει πορνιδίων, | σκολίων Μελήτου κ.τ.λ. His love-songs are mentioned by Athen. p. 605.

nick-name 'son of Laius[1].' Shortly after the condemnation of Socrates he was put to death by the Athenians in a fit of remorse[2].

There are still one or two poets of this century who perhaps deserve a passing mention. Aristarchus of Tegea, a contemporary of Euripides, and most prolific author, is said to have been the first to 'construct tragedies of the present length[3].' The reference is apparently to the usual size of dramas in the post-Euripidean period; but as no plays of that epoch have been preserved, the significance of the change must remain uncertain. The Achilles of Aristarchus was copied by Ennius, and is the only certain instance in Roman literature of the adaptation of a tragedy which was not by one of the three great dramatists[4]. Neophron of Sicyon, another fertile writer, was conspicuous for the prominence which he gave to slave characters[5]. But his chief claim to remembrance comes from the fact that his Medea is said to have suggested the masterpiece of Euripides[6]. Sthenelus, the 'plagiarist,' and the object of much ridicule on the comic stage[7], is mentioned by Aristotle as a writer who discarded the bombast of the tragic style, and composed in the language of ordinary life, without elevation or ornament[8]. But the result was common-place, without being effective; and it was said that his verses, in order to

[1] Schol. Plat. Apol. 18 B. His father's real name was Meletus (Diog. Laert. 2. 40). As regards his poetry, he is described as φαῦλος ποιητής in Schol. Plat. l.c., and ψυχρὸς ἐν τῇ ποιήσει in Suid. v. Μέλητος.

[2] Diog. Laert. 2. 43. Diod. Sic. 14. 37.

[3] Suidas, v. Ἀρίσταρχος· πρῶτος εἰς τὸ νῦν αὐτῶν μῆκος τὰ δράματα κατέστησεν. Suidas adds that he composed a play called Asclepius, as a thank-offering to the god for his recovery from a certain illness; and that he wrote seventy tragedies, won two victories, and lived more than ninety years. For his plays and fragments see Nauck, p. 728.

[4] Festus, p. 242. Plaut. Paenul. prol. 1.

[5] Suidas (v. Νεόφρων) says he wrote 120 tragedies, and πρῶτος εἰσήγαγε παιδαγωγοὺς καὶ οἰκετῶν βάσανον. He also tells the same story about him which he had previously told about another tragic poet called Nearchus, viz., that he accompanied Alexander the Great in his campaigns, and was put to death for conspiracy. Whence some scholars suggest that he really belonged to the age of Alexander, and that his Medea was an imitation of that by Euripides.

[6] On this question see p. 290.

[7] Aristoph. Vesp. 1313; Plat. Λάκωνες, frag. 2, Σκευαί, frag. 2 (Meineke, pp. 639, 659).

[8] Poet. c. 22.

be made palatable, required to be seasoned with salt and vinegar[1].

Many other poets of this period are familiar to us from the jests of Aristophanes, though all memory of their writings has disappeared. Such are the luxurious and easy-going Morychus; the glutton Nothippus; the shaggy-haired Hieronymus; Acestor, the 'bug-bear of the tragic choruses'; Theognis, whose frigid dullness froze the very rivers of Thrace; Gnesippus, with his chorus of Lydian slave girls; and Melanthius, the humourist, who gained more renown by his bons mots than by his tragedies, and whose 'wit and wisdom' were long remembered, and are often quoted by later writers. For these poets, and many others of even less celebrity, the reader is referred to the Appendix.

§ 3. *Tragedy at Athens in the Fourth Century.*

After the tragic drama had been developed by the genius of the Athenians into a great and impressive species of art, it began, as was natural, to be imitated by the other Greeks; and before the close of the fourth century dramatic performances fashioned on the Attic model had been established in almost every Hellenic community. But in spite of these numerous attempts at emulation on the part of neighbouring countries, it was a long time before any other people succeeded in disputing the theatrical supremacy of the Athenians. Up to the period of the Macedonian conquests their pre-eminence was practically uncontested. Athens continued, as heretofore, to be the great centre of dramatic productiveness, and the sole arbiter of taste in questions connected with the theatre. All the best tragedies were produced at her festivals, and every foreign aspirant after dramatic distinction looked to her for the ratification of his claims; nor was his ambition satisfied, unless he produced his plays on the Athenian stage, and secured if possible the crown

[1] Aristoph. Γηρυτάδης, frag. 9 | A. καὶ πῶς ἐγὼ Σθενέλου φάγοιμ' ἂν ῥήματα; | B. εἰς ὄξος ἐμβαπτόμενος ἢ ξηροὺς ἅλας. All that remains of his poetry is an hexameter quoted by Athen. p. 428, and an iambic line dubiously ascribed to him by some ancient critics (Nauck, p. 762).

of victory[1]. We have seen that even among the poets of the fifth century a large number were of foreign birth, and were attracted to Athens by the fame of her theatrical exhibitions. During the fourth century the stream still flowed in the same direction, and the supply of native poets was constantly augmented by the accession of foreigners, who either took up their abode in Athens, like Theodectes of Phaselis, or, like Dionysius the Syracusan tyrant, merely sent their tragedies there for representation.

The tragic drama was never cultivated with more eagerness and enthusiasm than during this epoch of its history. One novel and important feature was the increasing veneration bestowed upon the works of the older poets, which began to be exhibited at every festival as a necessary part of the entertainment, while the fame of the great actors by whom they were reproduced spread over the whole of Greece[2]. But the admiration inspired by the earlier drama was far from interfering, at any rate for a time, with the taste for new and contemporary compositions; it even acted as a stimulant; and the production of original plays continued to be carried on, during the whole of the fourth century, with unceasing vigour. The performance of 'new tragedies' at the City Dionysia formed the central attraction of the festival, and drew the largest crowds of spectators[3]; and the proceedings at the Lenaea seem to have been of much the same character[4]. As a result of this constant

[1] Cp. Plat. Laches, 183 A *παρ' ἐκείνοις ἄν τις τιμηθεὶς εἰς ταῦτα καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων πλεῖστ' ἂν ἐργάζοιτο χρήματα, ὥσπερ γε καὶ τραγῳδίας ποιητὴς παρ' ἡμῖν τιμηθείς. τοιγάρτοι ὃς ἂν οἴηται τραγῳδίαν καλῶς ποιεῖν, οὐκ ἔξωθεν κύκλῳ περὶ τὴν Ἀττικὴν κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας πόλεις ἐπιδεικνύμενος περιέρχεται, ἀλλ' εὐθὺς δεῦρο φέρεται καὶ τοῖσδ' ἐπιδείκνυσιν· εἰκότως.*

[2] On this reproduction of old tragedies see the Attic Theatre, pp. 96–100.

[3] Aesch. Ctesiph. § 34 *Κτησιφῶν δὲ ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ (κελεύει ἀνακηρύττειν) . . . οὐκ ἐκκλησιαζόντων Ἀθηναίων, ἀλλὰ τραγῳδῶν ἀγωνιζομένων καινῶν, οὐδ' ἐναντίον τοῦ δήμου, ἀλλ' ἐναντίον τῶν Ἑλλήνων.* Bekk. Anecd. p. 309 *τῶν τραγῳδῶν οἱ μὲν ἦσαν παλαιοί, οἱ παλαιὰ δράματα εἰσαγαγόντες, οἱ δὲ καινοί, οἱ καινὰ καὶ μηδέποτε εἰσαχθέντα. ὅταν οὖν τοῦτο γίνηται, πλείων ἐστὶ σπουδὴ τῶν Ἀθηναίων περὶ τὸ καινὸν δρᾶμα καὶ μηδέποτε ἠγωνισμένον.* That the production of new tragedies at the City Dionysia was regular and continuous during the fourth century is proved by numerous inscriptions (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 971 c–e, 973, 974).

[4] There is ample evidence that new tragedies were regularly exhibited at the Lenaea during this period. Thus Aphareus (Plut. X Orat. 839 C) brought

demand for fresh materials at each of the two great annual gatherings, the more popular dramatists of the period were compelled to be unusually prolific, and Carcinus is said to have written a hundred and sixty plays, and Astydamas as many as two hundred and forty[1].

But when we consider the merit, rather than the fertility, of this later tragedy, the case is very different. Although no specimens have been preserved, there is sufficient evidence to show that the loss is not a great one, and that these poets of the fourth century seldom rose above mediocrity. The reputation which they enjoyed was only of a moderate kind. Not one of them was successful in obtaining a place even among the secondary authors of the earlier period, such as Ion and Achaeus[2]. Aristotle, it is true, seems to regard them with some favour, and makes frequent reference to their plays[3], protesting at the same time against the unfairness of judging them by a comparison with their great predecessors[4]. But the very fact of the protest being made is significant of the estimation in which they were generally held; and a further proof of their inferiority is contained in Aristotle's own admission, that the success of a play in his days depended more upon the actor than upon the poet[5].

out plays on two occasions at the Lenaea (between 368 and 341 B.C.). The tyrant Dionysius won the prize for tragedy at the Lenaea in 367 (Diod. Sic. 15.74). An Attic inscription (Corp. Ins. Att. 2.977 c) records one victory of Theodectes, and seven of Astydamas, at the Lenaea.

[1] Suidas, vv. *Καρκίνος* (2), *Ἀστυδάμας* (1).

[2] Ion and Achaeus were placed in the Alexandrian canon, along with the three great dramatists. They must therefore have been considered superior to any tragic poets of the fourth century. See p. 404.

[3] The references to Theodectes are Rhet. 2. 23 (his Ajax and Alcmaeon), ibid. 24 (Orestes and Helena), Pol. 1. 6 (Helena), Poet. 16 (Tydeus), 11 and 18 (Lynceus). To Carcinus, Eth. Nicom. 7. 8 (Alope), Rhet. 2. 23 (Medea), 3. 16 (Oedipus), Poet. 16 (Thyestes), 17 (Amphiaraus). To Astydamas, Poet. 14 (Alcmaeon). To Polyidus, Poet. 16 and 17 (Iphigeneia). To Antiphon, Rhet. 2. 2 and 23 (Meleager), Eth. Eud. 7. 4 (Andromache), Mechan. 1. p. 847 (a quotation). To Chaeremon, Poet. 1 and 24 (Centaurus), Rhet. 2. 23 (Pentheus), 3. 11 (description of his style), Probl. 3. 16 (quotation).

[4] Poet. c. 18 *μάλιστα μὲν οὖν ἅπαντα δεῖ πειρᾶσθαι ἔχειν, εἰ δὲ μή, τὰ μέγιστα καὶ πλεῖστα, ἄλλως τε καὶ ὡς νῦν συκοφαντοῦσι τοὺς ποιητάς· γεγονότων γὰρ καθ' ἕκαστον μέρος ἀγαθῶν ποιητῶν, ἑκάστου τοῦ ἰδίου ἀγαθοῦ ἀξιοῦσι τὸν ἕνα ὑπερβάλλειν.*

[5] Rhet. 3. 1 *μεῖζον δύνανται νῦν τῶν*

The art of tragic composition had, in fact, by this time degenerated into a merely mechanical process. The old themes were treated in the old fashion, without life and inspiration. There was an absence of all creative impulse and original thought. The chorus still remained in the meaningless position in which it had been left by Agathon, and was neither totally abolished, nor brought into definite relationship with the play[1]. The ancient legends, though their capacities had been exhausted by frequent repetition, still supplied the stage with its only subjects. A few attempts, indeed, were made from time to time to create a new kind of historical drama, but they met with no success[2]; the majority of the poets shrank from anything in the way of a novel experiment; and so timid was their conservatism, that even in the selection of mythological plots they confined themselves to safe and well-tried legends, which had already proved successful in the theatre[3].

This wearisome monotony, and this frigid adherence to ancient models, remind one of the similar position of the French drama at the close of the last century. But unfortunately, in the case of the Greeks, there was no romantic movement at hand to rescue the stage from inanition, and Greek tragedy never recovered from the stagnation into which it now fell. Aristotle himself seems to have felt the danger of the situation, and the need for reform; and he mentions the possibility of creating a fresh interest, and infusing new blood into the lifeless system, by the introduction of fictitious plots such as Agathon's Flower[4].

ποιητῶν οἱ ὑποκριταί. Cp. the habit which Aristotle censures in the contemporary poets, of inserting irrelevant episodes to exploit particular actors (Poet. c. 9 *τοιαῦται δὲ (ἐπεισοδιώδεις πράξεις) ποιοῦνται ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν φαύλων ποιητῶν δι' αὐτούς, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν ἀγαθῶν διὰ τοὺς ὑποκριτάς*).

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 18.

[2] Cp. the Mausolus of Theodectes, and the Themistocles of Moschion (Nauck, pp. 802 and 812)—plays in which real Greek characters were apparently introduced, and which must therefore have been very different from the older type of historical tragedy, such as the Persae of Aeschylus.

[3] Aristot. Poet. c. 13 *πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ τοὺς τυχόντας μύθους ἀπηρίθμουν, νῦν δὲ περὶ ὀλίγας οἰκίας αἱ κάλλισται τραγῳδίαι συντίθενται, οἷον περὶ Ἀλκμαίωνα καὶ Οἰδίπουν καὶ Ὀρέστην καὶ Μελέαγρον καὶ Θυέστην καὶ Τήλεφον καὶ ὅσοις ἄλλοις συμβέβηκεν ἢ παθεῖν δεινὰ ἢ ποιῆσαι.* Cp. c. 14 *οὐ περὶ πολλὰ γένη αἱ τραγῳδίαι εἰσίν.*

[4] Poet. c. 9 *ὁμοίως γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ* (i.e. Agathon's Flower) *τά τε πράγματα καὶ*

If this suggestion had been carried out, and if the legendary subjects had been frankly abandoned, together with the whole paraphernalia of gorgeous dresses and stately masks, it is possible that the vitality of the tragic stage might have been restored, and that it might have entered upon a new lease of life. Stories based upon ordinary experience might have given rise to a domestic type of drama, corresponding in outward form to the later comedy, while distinguished by greater earnestness of tone. But the traditional character of tragedy as a religious ceremonial, and its intimate connexion with the worship of the gods, were obstacles in the way of any such radical and far-reaching innovations. Moreover, the time was unfavourable, and the impulse towards serious drama had almost spent itself. Poets of genuine creative power were drawn away by the superior attractions of comedy, which now began to predominate over its rival; and it was on the comic stage, with its lively realism and epicurean views of life, that the spirit of this later epoch found its truest expression.

(1) *Rhetorical Poets.*

The prime source of weakness, then, in the tragedy of the fourth century was its lifeless conventionality. But its decline was further accelerated by a second cause—the predominance of the rhetorical spirit. 'The older poets,' says Aristotle, 'made their characters speak like citizens; the poets of the present day make them speak like rhetoricians[1].' Rhetoric had, in fact, become the favourite pursuit of the age, and most of the tragic poets of this epoch were either orators themselves or pupils of orators. Their rhetorical propensities were intensified by the example of Euripides. Inspired with admiration for that portion of his work which was in reality the least dramatic of all, they copied and exaggerated his controversial scenes, and forensic manner of speech. The language of tragedy,

τὰ ὀνόματα πεποίηται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον εὐφραίνει. ὥστ' οὐ πάντως εἶναι ζητητέον τῶν παραδεδομένων μύθων, περὶ οὓς αἱ τραγῳδίαι εἰσίν, ἀντέχεσθαι.

[1] Poet. c. 6 οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι πολιτικῶς ἐποίουν λέγοντας, οἱ δὲ νῦν ῥητορικῶς.

divested of poetical ornament, began to resemble the ordinary diction of the advocate[1]. Occasionally indeed a poet like Moschion attempted to recall the grandeur of the Aeschylean verse[2]; but the prevailing taste was for argument and altercation. Streams of contentious verbiage took the place of delineations of character and motive[3]. The tragedies of the time, though constructed with skilful regularity[4], lacked human interest and genuine feeling. The object of the average dramatist was, not so much to illustrate ethical problems and paint the passions of mankind, as to create favourable opportunities for a set debate, and to display his powers of eloquence.

Chief among the rhetorical poets of the period is Theodectes, of Phaselis in Lycia[5]. He was born about 375, and settled in Athens at an early age, where he became the pupil of Plato and Isocrates, and especially of Aristotle, whose admiration for his beauty was compared by the ancients to the admiration of Socrates for Alcibiades[6]. Oratory was his principal profession, and he took pupils and wrote speeches as a means of livelihood[7]. But he also devoted himself to tragedy, and composed

[1] Aristot. Rhet. 3. 1 οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ τὰς τραγῳδίας ποιοῦντες ἔτι χρῶνται τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ καὶ ἐκ τῶν τετραμέτρων εἰς τὸ ἰαμβεῖον μετέβησαν διὰ τὸ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦτο τῶν μέτρων ὁμοιότατον εἶναι τῶν ἄλλων, οὕτω καὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἀφείκασιν ὅσα παρὰ τὴν διάλεκτόν ἐστι, οἷς οἱ πρότερον ἐκόσμουν. This unadorned style was imitated from Euripides, cp. ibid. c. 2 κλέπτεται δ' εὖ, ἐάν τις ἐκ τῆς εἰωθυίας διαλέκτου ἐκλέγων συντιθῇ· ὅπερ Εὐριπίδης ποιεῖ καὶ ὑπέδειξε πρῶτος. In the surviving fragments of the fourth-century poets the influence of Euripides, especially in his more forensic parts, is unmistakeable.

[2] Cp. his fragments (Nauck, pp. 812–816), and especially frag. 6, a long passage about the gradual civilisation of mankind, obviously composed in imitation of the celebrated description in the Prometheus of Aeschylus.

[3] Aristot. Poet. c. 6, where it is said that the tragedies of the later poets are deficient in characterisation (αἱ γὰρ τῶν νέων τῶν πλείστων ἀήθεις τραγῳδίαι εἰσίν).

[4] That the later tragedies were usually constructed with skill seems to be implied in Aristot. Poet. c. 6 ἔτι σημεῖον ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἐγχειροῦντες ποιεῖν πρότερον δύνανται τῇ λέξει καὶ τοῖς ἤθεσιν ἀκριβοῦν ἢ τὰ πράγματα συνίστασθαι, οἷον καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι ποιηταὶ σχεδὸν ἅπαντες.

[5] Suidas, v. Θεοδέκτης.

[6] Suidas, l. c. Athen. p. 566. He lived forty-one years (Suidas), and is known to have been dead in 333 (Plut. Alex. c. 17); whence his birth may be placed approximately in 375, which would make him about nine years younger than Aristotle.

[7] Phot. cod. 176.

fifty plays with conspicuous success, winning eight out of the thirteen contests in which he engaged[1]. Among his other writings was a metrical treatise on rhetoric, and certain conundrums in verse, which attracted great admiration[2]. His powers of memory were so remarkable, that he could repeat a lengthy poem after a single hearing[3]. As an orator he ranked among the greatest of his contemporaries, and though inferior to his master Isocrates, is highly praised by Cicero for the artistic polish of his language[4]. When the widow of Mausolus invited all the most distinguished rhetoricians of the age to compete in the celebration of her husband's virtues, Theodectes, among others, pronounced an eulogy on the dead prince, but was defeated by the superior eloquence of Theopompus; whereupon he composed a tragedy on the same subject, which obtained greater success[5]. He died early, at the age of forty-one, and was buried on the road to Eleusis, an epitaph on his tomb recording his victorious career in tragic poetry[6]. A statue was also erected to his memory in the market-place of his native Phaselis; and Alexander the Great, when passing through the town in 333, stopped to decorate it with garlands, in memory of his old friendship for Theodectes, whose acquaintance he had made when a pupil of Aristotle[7].

As a poet Theodectes was not only popular in his lifetime, but retained his celebrity for many centuries, and, among the lesser tragic writers, is one of those most frequently quoted by

[1] Suidas, l. c. Steph. Byzant., v. Φάσηλις. From Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 977 b and c it appears that seven of his victories were at the City Dionysia, and one at the Lenaea.

[2] Suidas, l. c. Athen. p. 451 quotes two of his riddles, viz. on 'A Shadow,' which is greatest at birth and death, but smallest at its prime; and on 'Day and Night,' two sisters, each of which gives birth to the other.

[3] Quint. Inst. Or. 11. 2. 51.

[4] Dion. Hal. de Isaeo, c. 19. Phot. cod. 176. Cicero, Orator 51. A defence of Socrates, composed by him, is quoted by Aristotle, Rhet. 2. 23.

[5] Gellius, 10. 18. Suidas (l. c.), in his version of the affair, confuses the speech and the tragedy (*οὗτος καὶ Ναυκράτης κ.τ.λ. . . . εἶπον ἐπιτάφιον ἐπὶ Μαυσώλῳ, Ἀρτεμισίας τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ προτρεψαμένης, καὶ ἐνίκησε μάλιστα εὐδοκιμήσας ἐν ᾗ εἶπε τραγῳδίᾳ· ἄλλοι δέ φασι Θεόπομπον ἔχειν τὰ πρωτεῖα.*

[6] Suidas, l. c. Plut. X Orat. 837 D. Steph. Byzant. v. Φάσηλις, who gives the epitaph (*ἥδε χθὼν κόλποισι Φασηλίτην Θεοδέκτην | κρύπτει, ὃν ηὔξησαν Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες· | ἐν δὲ χορῶν τραγικῶν ἱεραῖς τρισὶ καὶ δέχ' ἁμίλλαις | ὀκτὼ ἀγηράντους ἀμφεθέμην στεφάνους*).

[7] Plut. Alex. c. 17.

Stobaeus[1]. Aristotle also often refers to his works, but chiefly for the purpose of illustrating methods of argument, whence we may infer the rhetorical character of his tragedies[2]. Yet he speaks with admiration of his picture of Philoctetes, heroically endeavouring to conceal his pain; and highly praises the conduct of the crisis in the Lynceus, where the hero escapes imminent destruction almost by a miracle[3]. But any dramatic power which Theodectes may have possessed was obscured by his forensic training; and his fragments, fairly numerous in quantity, are echoes of the facile rhetoric of Euripides[4].

(2) *Literary and Philosophical Poets.*

The gradual decline in the feeling for dramatic truth and reality, which, as we have already pointed out, was characteristic of the tragic poetry of this period, is further exemplified in the rise and rapid development of what may be called the literary drama—a new species of composition, which was written solely for the reader, and without any view to actual representation. Plays of this kind had been unknown to the fifth century, but now became frequent and extremely popular. According to Aristotle, they differed from the dramas of the stage in the same way in which the exercises of the rhetorician differed from the eloquence of the assembly and the law courts, their merit consisting in the polished elegance of the diction, while their defect was a want of force and vitality[5].

The most admired of the authors of this class was Chaeremon, a poet who flourished about the middle of the century, and from whom several extracts have been preserved[6]. His style

[1] Viz. seven times in the Ἀνθολόγιον, and three times in the Ἐκλογαί.

[2] Rhet. 2. 23 (twice), 24 (twice), Pol. 1. 6.

[3] Eth. Nic. 7. 8. Poet. c. 11. Theodectes made a slight alteration in the fable about Philoctetes, causing the hero to be bitten in the hand, instead of the foot (Nauck, p. 803).

[4] Cp. the fragments in Nauck, pp. 801-807.

[5] Aristot. Rhet. 3. 12. Such writers are called by Aristotle ἀναγνωστικοί and γραφικοί, and their style ἀναγνωστική and γραφική, as opposed to the ἀγωνιστική or ὑποκριτική of the regular dramatists.

[6] He is called a 'tragic poet' by Athenaeus (p. 43 τραγικός, 35 τραγῳδός). The references to him in Eubulus and Ephippus (Meineke, 3. pp. 266, 328) give his date as the middle of the

is slightly laboured and artificial, and shows a preference for devious and far-fetched modes of expression, which are ridiculed by the comic poets[1]. But at the same time it is vivid and picturesque and full of prettiness. Chaeremon seems to have excelled in the art of word-painting, and displays a perceptiveness for varieties and contrasts of colour which is rare among classical writers. His longest fragment is a graceful description of a troop of maidens, wearied out with play, and lying asleep in a flowery meadow, amid the 'sun-like crocus' and the 'dark-leaved wings of the violet,' their raiment still girt up for the dance, and their white limbs exposed like a 'living picture,' and shining brightly in the midst of the surrounding darkness[2]. His passion for flowers, the 'daughters of the fragrant spring-time,' reminds one of Calderon; and he loses no opportunity of dwelling on their beauties, whether some maiden's tresses are being crowned with ivy and narcissus, or a garland woven with 'white lilies and bright-shining roses,' or a band of girls is scattered over the fields, 'pursuing with joy the radiant children of the meadow[3].'

In addition to his tragedies Chaeremon, departing from the beaten track, also composed a work called the Centaur, of a new and original type, but of which nothing is known beyond the fact that it was written in 'every variety of metre.' By Athenaeus it is called a 'drama,' and by Aristotle a 'mixed rhapsody[4].' The word 'rhapsody' in Greek could only be applied to an epic composition; hence it has been suggested that the 'Centaur' was in reality a combination of two kinds of writing, the epic and the dramatic, and that its twofold nature

fourth century. The fragments and titles of plays will be found in Nauck, pp. 781-792. Suidas (v. Χαιρήμων) calls him κωμικός—apparently a mere slip, since his fragments clearly belong to the tragic style.

[1] Thus Eubulus ridiculed his description of water as ποταμοῦ σῶμα (Meineke, 3. p. 266).

[2] Frag. 14 (Nauck, p. 786).

[3] Frags. 5-13.

[4] Athen. Poet. c. 1 ὁμοίως δὲ κἂν εἴ τις ἅπαντα τὰ μέτρα μιγνύων ποιοῖτο τὴν μίμησιν, καθάπερ Χαιρήμων ἐποίησε Κένταυρον μικτὴν βαψῳδίαν ἐξ ἁπάντων τῶν μέτρων. Ibid. c. 24 ἔτι δὲ ἀτοπώτερον εἰ μιγνύοι τις αὐτὰ (hexameters, iambics, and trochaics) ὥσπερ Χαιρήμων. Athen. p. 608 calls it a δρᾶμα πολύμετρον, and quotes from it two short iambic passages.

was denoted by its title. But in the absence of further evidence it is impossible to come to any certain decision on the subject.

Under this same class of dramatists, whose works were not intended for the stage, we may also include the various literary forgers, who began to appear about this time, and amused themselves with writing plays in the names of earlier poets. Heracleides of Pontus, a disciple of Plato, and voluminous author on every kind of subject, was one of the chief offenders, and composed several tragedies which he ascribed to Thespis[1]. These tragedies, whether written originally with the intention to deceive, or merely as literary exercises, appear in course of time to have obtained a permanent footing in Greek literature as the genuine works of Thespis, and are probably the source of most of the spurious Thespian fragments[2].

The example of Heracleides was followed by one of his pupils, Dionysius the Renegade[3], who succeeded in imposing on his own master with a clever imitation of a Sophoclean tragedy. Heracleides was so completely deceived by this composition, that he proceeded to quote it in one of his writings as a genuine work. When informed of the forgery by Dionysius, he refused for a long time to be convinced; but was eventually compelled to admit his mistake when it was pointed out to him that the play contained an ingeniously concealed acrostic, signifying that 'Heracleides is unacquainted with literature[4].'

The writing of dramas having come in this way to be divorced from any necessary connexion with the stage, many of the philosophers of the time took the opportunity of making their tenets known to the general reader by throwing them into a dramatic form. Several tragedies, worthless from a theatrical point of view, but full of expositions of cynical doctrines, were handed about in later times as the work of Diogenes[5]; and

[1] Diog. Laert. 5. 92.

[2] See Bentley's Phalaris, p. 241 ff.

[3] Διονύσιος ὁ μεταθέμενος, so called because he abandoned Zeno in favour of the Cyrenaics (Diog. Laert. 7. 166).

[4] Ibid. 5. 92 and 93.

[5] The names of seven of these tragedies are mentioned by Diog. Laert. 6. 73 and 80, who adds that some people ascribed them to Philiscus of Aegina, a pupil of Diogenes, others to a certain Pasiphon. Cp. Julian, Or. 6. p. 186. A few insignificant fragments are preserved (Nauck, pp. 807–809).

Crates, his disciple, also published plays of a 'lofty and philosophical' character, from which certain fragments have been preserved[1]. Authors of this kind, whose dramas were composed for a special purpose, and to enforce peculiar tenets, stand on a very different footing from reflective poets like Euripides, with whom the poetry was the main consideration, while the philosophy merely gave a general colouring to the whole. These didactic tragedies, on the other hand, made no pretence to dramatic excellence; nor are they of any importance in the history of the drama except as instances of the misuse of a literary form.

(3) *Tragedy in Families.*

While philosophers and men of letters were thus amusing themselves with dramatic composition, the profession of the regular playwright continued to be represented by numerous writers, and especially by the descendants of the older poets, who still kept up the family tradition. The younger Sophocles, the son of Ariston, had been the favourite companion of his grandfather, by whom he was entrusted with the duty of producing his posthumous play, the Oedipus Coloneus[2]. In 396 he began to exhibit tragedies on his own account, and his dramatic career lasted for many years, and was highly successful[3]. Among his contemporaries was the elder Astydamas, the son of Morsimus, and a descendant of Aeschylus' sister[4]. He, too, followed the vocation of tragic poetry, making his first appearance in 398, and continuing to produce dramas till his death at the age of sixty[5].

The elder Astydamas had a son, Astydamas the younger, who was the most prolific and successful dramatist of the fourth century[6]. He began life as a pupil of Isocrates, but soon

[1] Diog. Laert. 6. 98. Nauck, pp. 809, 810.

[2] Vita Soph. (p. 4 Dindf.). Argum. Oed. Col.

[3] Diod. Sic. 14. 53. Suidas, v. Σοφοκλῆς (2). Suidas says he 'exhibited' forty plays, or according to some accounts eleven, and that he won seven victories. Diodorus gives his victories as twelve. The figure eleven is clearly too small, and probably denotes the number of plays preserved in later times.

[4] Suidas, v. Ἀστυδάμας (1).

[5] Diog. Laert. 14. 43.

[6] Suidas, v. Ἀστυδάμας (2).

abandoned rhetoric for the stage, where he won his first victory in 372[1]. In the course of a long career he produced two hundred and forty plays, and was crowned victor in fifteen contests[2]. His Hector is cited by Plutarch as one of the glories of the Attic stage[3]. But in spite of his popularity, his works have all perished; and nothing is now known about his dramatic methods except the fact that in his treatment of the Alcmaeon legend he modified the brutality of the original story, by making Alcmaeon kill his mother accidentally, instead of by design—an interesting innovation, which appears to indicate that the growing humanity of the age regarded the crime of deliberate matricide as too horrible even for theatrical representation[4]. In 340 he exhibited his Parthenopaeus, which excited so much admiration, that the Athenians rewarded him with a bronze statue in the theatre. But when he proceeded to inscribe some verses on the base, complaining that he had no rivals worthy of his powers, and that he ought to have been born in the time of the great poets of old, the people were so repelled by his vanity, that they ordered the inscription to be erased, and henceforth to 'praise one's self like Astydamas' passed into a proverb[5].

[1] Marmor Par. cp. 72 *ἀφ' οὗ Ἀστυδάμας Ἀθήνησιν ἐνίκησεν κ.τ.λ.* Suidas says it was the *elder* Astydamas who was the pupil of Isocrates; but as Isocrates was born in 436, and taught rhetoric in Chios before he began to teach it in Athens, and as the elder Astydamas was already exhibiting tragedies in 398, the chronology seems inconsistent, and there can be little doubt that Suidas has confused the father with the son.

[2] He won the prize at the City Dionysia in 341 with the Achilles, Athamas, and Antigone; and in 340 with the Parthenopaeus and Lycaon (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 973). Of his fifteen victories eight were gained at the City Dionysia, seven at the Lenaea (ibid. 2. 977 b and c). Suidas, v. *Ἀστυδάμας* (1), ascribes the 240 tragedies and fifteen victories to the *elder* Astydamas; but here again he has no doubt put the father for the son, for (1) the younger Astydamas was much the most celebrated dramatist of the two (cp. the bronze statue erected in his honour, and his successive victories in 341 and 340), and (2) in the list of poets in Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 977 the Astydamas who gained the fifteen victories appears as a contemporary of Theodectes, and must therefore have been the son.

[3] Plut. de Glor. Athen. c. 7.

[4] Aristot. Poet. c. 14. For the surviving titles and fragments see Nauck, pp. 777-780.

[5] Suidas, v. *σαυτὴν ἐπαινεῖς*. Photius 502. 21. The verses ran as follows—*εἴθ' ἐγὼ ἐν κείνοις γενόμην ἢ κεῖνοι ἅμ' ἡμῖν, | οἱ γλώσσης τερπνῆς πρῶτα δοκοῦσι φέρειν, | ὡς ἐπ' ἀληθείης ἐκρίθην ἀφεθεὶς παράμιλλος· | νῦν δὲ χρόνῳ προέχουσ', ᾧ φθόνος οὐχ ἕπεται.* Both Suidas and

Another descendant of a dramatic family meets us in the person of the younger Carcinus, son of Xenocles, and grandson of the Carcinus ridiculed by Aristophanes[1]. This Carcinus flourished at the beginning of the century, and was more popular and successful than his grandfather[2]. He wrote a hundred and sixty plays, and appears to have won eleven victories[3]. His Aerope is mentioned by Plutarch as a great and memorable tragedy[4]. His picture of Cercyon's struggle for self-mastery calls forth the admiration of Aristotle, who refers to his plays on several other occasions[5]. In his Medea he seems to have been actuated by the same sentiments as Astydamas, and relieved the horrors of the plot by causing Medea merely to conceal her children, without actually slaying them[6]. His name, like that of Astydamas, passed into a proverb, a 'poem of Carcinus' being used as an equivalent for anything

Photius relate the story in reference to the *elder* Astydamas. But as the Parthenopaeus of Astydamas was produced in 340 (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 973), when the father had been dead for some time (he began to produce plays in 398 and died at the age of sixty), it is clear that the son must have been the person concerned.

The statue of Astydamas was erected in the theatre in 340, while it was not until about 330 that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were granted a similar distinction, through the instrumentality of Lycurgus (Plut. X Orat. 841 F), who completed the theatre about that time (Attic Theatre, p. 108). It is to this fact that Diog. Laert. 2. 43 refers, when recounting instances of Athenian ingratitude, and says *καὶ Ἀστυδάμαντα πρῶτον τῶν περὶ Αἰσχύλον ἐτίμησαν εἰκόνι χαλκῇ*. The phrase *τῶν περὶ Αἰσχύλον* is somewhat dubious, and has been explained in two ways, (1) that Astydamas was the first of the 'Aeschylean school' to be rewarded with a statue, he being one of the Aeschylean line of tragic poets, (2) that he obtained this honour before 'Aeschylus and his contemporaries.'

[1] Suidas v. Καρκίνος (2). Harpocrat. v. Καρκίνος.

[2] Suidas, l. c.

[3] Suidas, l. c. *δράματα ἐδίδαξεν ρξ', ἐνίκησε δὲ α'*. In the list of victories at the City Dionysia (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 977 b) one of the entries is [Καρκί]νος ΔΙ. If this restoration is correct, then the *α'* in Suidas should be altered to *ια'*.

[4] Plut. de Glor. Athen. c. 7.

[5] Eth. Nicom. 7. 8. Aristotle refers to the recognition scene of the Thyestes (Poet. c. 16), mentions the disastrous failure of the Amphiaraus, owing to an absurdity in the plot (ibid. c. 17), and quotes the arguments of Jocasta in the Oedipus (Rhet. 3. 16).

[6] Aristot. Rhet. 2. 23 *ἄλλος τόπος τὸ ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτηθέντων κατηγορεῖν ἢ ἀπολογεῖσθαι, οἷον ἐν τῇ Καρκίνου Μηδείᾳ οἱ μὲν κατηγοροῦσιν ὅτι τοὺς παῖδας ἀπέκτεινεν, οὐ φαίνεσθαι γοῦν αὐτούς· ἥμαρτε γὰρ ἡ Μήδεια περὶ τὴν ἀποστολὴν τῶν παίδων. ἡ δ' ἀπολογεῖται ὅτι οὐκ ἂν τοὺς παῖδας, ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰάσονα ἂν ἀπέκτεινεν· τοῦτο γὰρ ἥμαρτεν ἂν μὴ ποιήσασα, εἴπερ καὶ θάτερον ἐποίησεν.*

particularly obscure. The phrase, however, was simply due to an ambiguous speech in his Orestes; and his general style, as may be seen in the existing fragments, was clear and straightforward[1]. He resided, during a part of his lifetime, at the court of the younger Dionysius in Syracuse; and the longest and most striking of his fragments is a local allusion to the Sicilian worship of Demeter[2]. His son, the younger Xenocles, continued to write tragedies in accordance with the ancestral tradition, and is the last known representative of the family[3].

(4) *Dionysius the Tyrant.*

Of the remaining poets of the fourth century the most interesting is the elder Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, who reigned from 405 to 367. Like Cardinal Richelieu, he was consumed with a passionate desire for theatrical renown, and in spite of his political cares, found time for the composition of tragedies[4]. He was an enthusiastic admirer of the older poets, and wrote his plays on a desk which had been previously used by Aeschylus[5]. He also purchased from the heirs of Euripides his harp, pen, and writing-tablets, and dedicated them as an offering in the temple of the Muses[6]. He spared no pains to make his dramatic efforts known to the Greeks at large; and on one occasion despatched a theatrical troupe, with splendid scenic apparatus, to the Olympic games, to give an exhibition of his tragedies[7]. He also produced plays at

[1] Plut. p. 132. 20. Suidas, v. *Καρκίνου ποιήματα*. Athen. p. 351. For his fragments, see Nauck, pp. 797–800.

[2] Diod. Sic. 5. 5. Diog. Laert. 2. 7 (where *κωμῳδοποιός* should probably be altered to *τραγῳδοποιός*).

[3] Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 86 *Ξενοκλῆς· υἱὸς Καρκίνου . . . εἰσὶ δέ, ὥς φασι, δύο Ξενοκλεῖς τραγῳδοὶ γεγονότες*. It is a probable conjecture that this second Xenocles was the great-grandson of the original Carcinus.

[4] When the younger Dionysius was asked by Philip of Macedon how his father had found leisure to write so many tragedies, he replied that he used the time which 'people such as you and me spend in drinking' (Plut Timol. c. 15).

[5] Lucian, Adv. Indoct. c. 15. Meineke (Hist. Crit. Com. Graec. p. 362) suggests that this story was taken from Eubulus' comedy about Dionysius, which began, as Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 136 relates, with a description of the incongruous manner in which Dionysius' house was furnished.

[6] Vita Eur. p. 9 (Dindf.).

[7] Cramer, Anecd. Graec. 1 p. 303 *ἀπέστειλε γὰρ οὗτος ἐς Ὀλύμπια δράματα αὐτοῦ τραγικὰ καὶ σκηνήν· καὶ ἀνεγιγνώ-*

Athens on several occasions, but without much success until the year 367, when he won the first prize at the Lenaea[1]. His death, which occurred in the same year, was ascribed by popular tradition to his excessive joy over this victory, or to his over-indulgence at the banquet in its honour[2].

The greatness of his position, and his double character of prince and poet, made him the object of many witticisms. Eubulus wrote a comedy in ridicule of his poetical pretensions, and anecdotes concerning his vanity and sensitiveness were widely circulated[3]. The best known of these is the story about Philoxenus, the dithyrambic poet, who had been sent to the quarries, the Syracusan place of punishment, for laughing during the recitation of one of the king's tragedies. Next day Dionysius, having relented, caused the prisoner to be brought back into his presence, and, after reciting another tragedy, asked him for his opinion. Philoxenus paused for a moment, and then replied, 'Send me back to the quarries.' The humour of the answer disarmed the tyrant's indignation, and the two men became friends again. For the future, however, Philoxenus was more cautious in his criticisms, endeavouring to satisfy Dionysius, without doing violence to his own conscience; and when a pathetic passage had been recited, he used to remark ambiguously that these were 'very pitiful lines[4].'

Dionysius is said to have also written histories, and even comedies. But the latter fact was disputed, though a play of a satiric tendency, in ridicule of Plato, existed under his name[5]. His tragedies, which excited the astonishment of Plutarch,

σκοντο. Cp. Diod. Sic. 14. 109, 15. 6. The expedition was shipwrecked on its return—a disaster which people regarded as a divine visitation on account of the badness of the king's poetry.

[1] Diod. Sic. 15. 74. Tzetzes, Chil. 5. 178.

[2] Diod. Sic. l.c. Plin. Hist. Nat. 7. 53. According to Plutarch (Dion, c. 6) and others, his death was hastened on by the physicians, to make room for his son.

[3] See the fragments of Eubulus' Διονύσιος in Meineke 3, p. 217. In frag. 1 the character of the tyrant is described as follows: ἀλλ' ἔστι τοῖς σεμνοῖς μὲν αὐθαδέστερος, | καὶ τοῖς κόλαξι πᾶσι τοῖς σκώπτουσί τε | εἰς αὐτὸν εὐόργητος· ἡγεῖται δὲ δὴ | τούτους μόνους ἐλευθέρους, κἂν δοῦλος ᾖ. Ephippus, another poet of the Middle Comedy, includes among a series of curses Διονυσίου δὲ δράματ' ἐκμαθεῖν δέοι (Meineke 3, p. 335).

[4] Diod. Sic. 15. 6.

[5] Suidas v. Διονύσιος. Aelian, Var. Hist. 13. 18. Tzetzes, Chil. 5. 185.

owing to their virtuous sentiments and stern denunciations of tyranny, are regarded as inferior productions by Cicero, and treated with contempt by Lucian[1]. His artificial use of words in their etymological sense is also ridiculed by various writers[2]. But at the same time he is quoted on several occasions by Stobaeus, in his collection of extracts; and the performance of his works at Athens, and his victory at the Lenaea, would seem to show that, in spite of the hostility to which his position and character exposed him, he was a poet of fair average merit[3].

§ 4. *The Extension of Greek Tragedy beyond Athens.*

The group of Athenian tragic poets who flourished at the close of the fourth century were the last representatives of their class to attain to wide distinction, and with their disappearance the supremacy of Athens in the domain of serious drama came to an end. In order therefore to complete the account of Greek tragedy, all that remains is to trace the course of its fortunes among the various other nations of the Hellenic world. This latter part of its history possesses little importance from the dramatic point of view, and is concerned, not so much with literary achievements, as with theatrical records. The tragic drama, after it had passed out of the hands of the Athenians, and been transformed into a cosmopolitan institution, though it advanced to the highest pitch of external splendour, steadily declined in real significance. Its inventive powers were exhausted, and it ceased from this time forward to produce anything in the way of original work which could claim to be of real and permanent value. The glory which it now acquired was derived, not so much from its own creations, as from its constant reproductions of the great tragedies of the past. Still, in spite of this increasing degeneracy, the record of its progress among the various Greek races is not without a certain interest of the historical kind; and its importance,

[1] Plut. de Alex. Fort. c. 5. Cic. Tusc. 5. 22. Lucian, Adv. Indoct. c. 15.

[2] Athen. p. 98 gives some examples, e. g. he called a mouse-hole *μυστήριον* because *τοὺς μῦς τηρεῖ*, and a javelin *βαλάντιον* because *ἐναντίον βάλλεται*. But it is unlikely that these fancies were inserted in his tragic compositions.

[3] Cp. his fragments, Nauck, pp. 793–796.

even during this period of infecundity and literary decay, may easily be underrated. As a humanising influence it still continued to render conspicuous service to the cause of Greek civilisation. By perpetuating the memory of the great Attic poets among the masses of the people, and by familiarising distant regions with the masterpieces of the ancient drama, it contributed in no small degree to the general dissemination of Hellenistic culture among the nations of antiquity.

The extension of Greek tragedy beyond its original home was facilitated, in the first instance, by its close association with the worship of Dionysus. All Greek towns of any importance had their annual Dionysia, which were the source of much local pride and rivalry, each district endeavouring to surpass its neighbours in the splendour and costliness of the celebration. When, therefore, the tragic drama had come to be the chief glory of the great Athenian festivals, the spirit of emulation soon caused it to be adopted by the inhabitants of other cities. Already, before the close of the fifth century, it had been introduced into many of the Attic demes[1], as well as into various neighbouring countries, such as Locris, Sicily, and even Macedonia[2]. In the fourth century its progress was much more rapid, and it began to be regarded as an essential feature in every Dionysiac gathering; so much so, that by the time of Alexander it may be said to have become practically co-extensive with the Bacchic worship, and to have penetrated into every region of the world in which the Greek language was spoken[3].

[1] Thus Munychia is known to have had a theatre as early as 410 B.C. (Thuc. 8. 93), and Euripides is said to have exhibited tragedies in the Peiraeus (Aelian, Var. Hist. 2. 13). Probably the drama had become fairly common in the Attic demes before the close of the fifth century, though there is little direct information on the subject. In the fourth century the evidence begins to be abundant; see the Attic Theatre, p. 42. Cp. also the recently discovered inscriptions about dramatic performances at Icaria (American Journal of Philology, March, 1889).

[2] Thus Callippides, the actor employed by Sophocles, is said to have attended a dramatic performance at Opus (Vita Soph.). Aeschylus exhibited his Persae and his Aetneae in Sicily (Vita Aesch., Schol. Pers. 1026). Archelaus of Macedon (413–399 B.C.) established dramatic contests in honour of Zeus and the Muses (Diod. Sic. 17. 16).

[3] The universal prevalence of the Bacchic worship is proved by the long

During the early period of its progress throughout Greece it continued to be confined, in most cases, to these festivals of Dionysus[1]. But as time went on, it advanced to such a height of fame and popularity, that, in order to satisfy the universal demand, its introduction was permitted at various other festal gatherings, with which Dionysus had no connexion[2]. The example, when once set, became contagious; the old limitations were gradually abolished; and when we come to the second century, there appear to have been very few religious festivals, provided they were of a musical and artistic character, in which exhibitions of tragedy were not included.

These musical and literary contests, held in honour of the various deities, were extremely common throughout Greece; and their general character, during the later ages of Greek civilisation, is fairly well known from various inscriptions. Records have been preserved of no less than six such meetings in Boeotia alone. There was a festival of Serapis at Tanagra, of the Muses at Thespiae, and of Zeus Soter at Acraephiae; Orchomenus had its Homoloïa and Charitesia, Oropus its Amphiaraïa[3]. Copious notices also remain of similar celebrations at Delphi, Aphrodisias, and Magnesia[4]. The com-

list of Dionysiac festivals given in Müller's Bühnenalt, p. 378. In the case of about twenty-five of these festivals there is direct evidence for the existence of dramatic performances (Müller, l. c.), and the evidence in many cases reaches back as far as the fourth century. Whence we may fairly assume that by that date the drama had become a part of most, if not all, of the Bacchic celebrations.

[1] Cp. however, as an early instance to the contrary, the festival established by Archelaus of Macedon in the fifth century (p. 435, note 2).

[2] It was introduced, for example, at the Pythian Games (Plut. Quaest. Symp. 5. 2 ἐν Πυθίοις ἐγίγνοντο λόγοι περὶ τῶν ἐπιθέτων ἀγωνισμάτων. παραδεξάμενοι γὰρ ἐπὶ τρισὶ καθεστῶσιν ἐξαρχῆς, αὐλητῇ καὶ κιθαριστῇ καὶ κιθαρῳδῷ, τὸν τραγῳδόν, ὥσπερ πύλης ἀνοιχθείσης οὐκ ἀντέσχον ἀθρόοις συνεισιοῦσιν παντοδαποῖς ἀκροάμασιν).

[3] See Corp. Ins. Gr. 1583 and 1584; Lüders, die Dionysischen Künstler, p. 186 (Χαριτήσια and Ὁμολώϊα). Bullet. de Corresp. Hellén. 2, pp. 590 and 591 (Σεραπιεῖα). Corp. Ins. Gr. 1585 and 1586; Mittheilungen des archaeol. Instituts in Athen. 3, p. 142; Decharmes, Archives des missions scientif., 1867, p. 522 (Μουσεῖα). Corp. Ins. Gr. 1587; Keil, Sylloge Inscrip. Boeot. p. 60 (Σωτήρια). Rangabè, Antiq. Hellén. 2, No. 965; Ephem. Archaeol. 1884, pp. 120–127 (Ἀμφιαράϊα).

[4] Corp. Ins. Gr. 2758 (festival at Aphrodisias, name unknown). Corp. Ins. Gr. 2759 (Λυσιμάχια at Aphrodisias). Wescher et Foucart, Inscr. de Delphes, 1866, n. 3–6 (Σωτήρια at Delphi).

petitions at these local gatherings were of the most diverse character. The proceedings usually began with a contest between trumpeters, and another between heralds. Then came hymns in honour of the god of the festival, and panegyrics, both in prose and verse, on the prince or governor of the district. These were followed by recitations of epic poetry, some original, some from the ancient poets. Then there were instrumental performances on flute and harp, songs in various styles of music, dithyrambic choruses of boys and men, and finally the dramatic entertainments. These latter consisted usually of original satyric plays, followed by old tragedies and old comedies, and finishing up with new and original tragedies and comedies. The regular presence of theatrical exhibitions at so many of these non-Dionysiac assemblies is a proof of the enormous popularity which the drama had by this time attained[1].

Up to this point in our description of its progress tragedy still appears in its old character of a religious institution, and though no longer peculiar to Dionysus, is nevertheless confined to sacred gatherings in honour of the gods. In this respect it bears a striking resemblance to the Miracle Plays of mediaeval Europe, which were also performed under priestly direction at the great feast-days of the Church. But the ancient drama, like its modern counterpart, began in course of time to show signs of secularisation. The process, however, was never carried out with anything like the same completeness. The modern theatre, dissociated from religious worship and official control, soon passed into the hands of private enterprise, and became a part of the everyday amusements of the people. The drama of the Greeks, on the other hand, continued throughout its history to be mainly restricted to the great

Mittheil. des archaeol. Instituts in Athen, 1894, pp. 96, 97 (Ῥωμαῖα at Magnesia).

[1] In addition to the detailed records of dramatic performances at the festivals just mentioned, there are also casual references to the presence of tragedy at the following non-Dionysiac meetings—the Olympia at Smyrna (Philostrat. Vit. Soph. I. 25. 3 and 9), the Urania at Sparta, the Actia at Nicopolis, and the Κοινὰ Ἀσίας at Philadelphia (Corp. Ins. Gr. 1420).

religious festivals, and though sometimes performed at secular gatherings, was never entrusted even then to private individuals, or allowed to become a daily form of entertainment. Dramatic exhibitions were reserved for great occasions of public rejoicing or of national triumph, and the right to produce them remained in the hands of princes, generals, and other persons of distinguished rank.

One of the earliest of these secular performances is that which was given by Philip of Macedon in honour of his daughter's marriage, and which was rendered memorable by his assassination[1]. His son, Alexander the Great, also took the keenest delight in the theatre, and was accustomed to celebrate the close of his campaigns with theatrical exhibitions on a scale of unapproachable splendour. Pavilions of silver and gold were erected, at such times, for the reception of the guests; the best actors were hired from every city of Greece; and subject kings were often compelled to fill the office of choregi. On one occasion no less than three thousand performers were collected together to take part in the various musical and dramatic competitions[2]. From this time forward gorgeous dramatic spectacles became a favourite amusement with the famous princes of the time. Antiochus the Great is said to have surpassed all previous monarchs in the splendour of his shows[3]; and Antony and Cleopatra, in the winter before the final campaign against Augustus, wasted their time at Samos in a long series of similar entertainments[4].

In these various ways, then, the tragic drama was rapidly popularised, and became a more or less familiar spectacle, during the Hellenistic period, in every part of the world where Greek colonists were settled[5]. Its range now extended from

[1] Diod. Sic. 16. 92.

[2] Plut. Alex. cc. 4, 29, 72. Diod. Sic. 17. 16. Athen. p. 538.

[3] Livy, 41. 20.

[4] Plut. Anton. c. 56.

[5] The extent to which tragedy had spread over the Hellenic world in the Alexandrian period may be illustrated in three ways; (1) by its regular presence at the festivals of Dionysus, which, as already shown (p. 435), were practically universal; (2) by the enormous number of Greek theatres which are known to have been erected. See the list in Müller's Bühnenalt. pp. 4–14, where they are found in a continuous series

France and Italy in the west to Syria and Phoenicia in the east. Even among barbarous nations it was not unknown. Tradition speaks of certain performances of Greek tragedy having been held in the remotest parts of Spain[1]; and in the east, at the courts of princes who had acquired a tinge of Hellenic refinement, it was often cultivated with enthusiasm. When Lucullus captured Tigranocerta, he found it full of Greek actors, whom the king of Armenia had summoned from every quarter, to celebrate the opening of his new theatre[2]. And after the slaughter of Crassus at Carrhae, when the two kings of Parthia and of Armenia were celebrating the marriage of their son and daughter at a nuptial banquet, the entertainment provided for the guests was a recitation from the Bacchae of Euripides; and it was on this occasion that one of the actors in the piece—a certain Jason of Tralles—roused his barbaric audience to enthusiasm, by declaiming the verses of Agave with the head of Crassus in his hands[3].

§ 5. *Tragedy at Alexandria.*

Though tragedy had now become the common heritage of all the Hellenic nations, and though its popularity was never more remarkable, still this external magnificence, as we have previously pointed out, was accompanied by an incurable inward debility; and the only place in which, during its latter days, it attained to any literary importance was Alexandria. Here, for a brief space of time, it seemed to make a final effort to recover its old position. Alexandria, under the wise administration of the first Ptolemy, had rapidly developed into

from Sicily in the west to Phoenicia in the east; (3) by the existence of Guilds of Greek Actors in almost every part of the ancient world (see Lüders, die Dionysischen Künstler, pp. 65–97). Among the remote regions in which they are known to have been established we may mention Nismes in France, Messene in Sicily, Naples and Rhegium in Italy, Cyprus, Cythera, Ptolemais, Thyatira in Lydia, and Pessinus in Galatia.

[1] Viz. at Hipola in Baetica, where it is said that the country people were so terrified by the stern appearance of the tragic actor, that they fled out of the theatre in a panic (Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. 5. 9).

[2] Plut. Lucull. c. 29.

[3] Ibid. Crassus, c. 33.

the greatest commercial city of the age, and its wealth and prosperity were unrivalled. Under his son, Ptolemy the Second, who reigned from 285 to 247, it likewise became the most important centre of literary and scientific culture in the ancient world. The lavish encouragement given to every kind of talent, and the munificent foundations of the Library and the Museum, attracted distinguished men from all parts of Greece. The court of Ptolemy was thronged with poets and scholars, philosophers and mathematicians, such as Theocritus, Euclid, and Callimachus. Nor were the arts less generously patronised. The leading painters and architects of the period found their time fully occupied either in painting the celebrities of the court, or in decorating the city with sumptuous buildings.

In this wealthy and magnificent capital the worship of Dionysus, the tutelary deity of the drama, was celebrated with extraordinary splendour. The great Bacchic processions, of which a minute account has been preserved, excelled all similar ceremonials in the gorgeous brilliancy of the spectacle [1]. The same magnificence was also displayed in the management of the annual festivals of Dionysus, and no pains were spared to add to their attractiveness. The contests in tragedy, comedy, and satyric drama were exceptionally numerous [2]; the best poets and actors were drawn to Alexandria by the liberality of the prizes [3]; and the hospitality with which they were entertained on their arrival was of a princely character, special apartments being provided for their accommodation in the royal quarter of the city [4]. As a result of this munificent patronage the Alexandrian theatre,

[1] Athen. pp. 198–202.

[2] Cp. the large number of plays ascribed to some of the Alexandrian poets. Homer wrote forty-five or fifty-five, Lycophron forty-six or sixty-four, Philiscus forty-two, Sosiphanes seventy-three. That they wrote for the stage, and not for the reader, may be inferred from (1) Theocrit. 17. 112 ff., where the dramatic contests are described, (2) Suidas v. Σωσιφάνης, who is credited with seven victories, (3) Suidas v. Σωσίθεος, who is described as the *antagonist* of Homer, the tragic poet. As for the popularity of the satyric drama cp. the fact that Sositheus, Lycophron, and Callimachus are all said to have written plays of this species (Anthol. Pal. 7. 707, Diog. Laert. 2. 133, Suidas v. Καλλίμαχος).

[3] Theocrit. 17. 112 ff.

[4] Athen. p. 169.

during the reign of the second Ptolemy, became by far the most famous of all the theatres of the world.

Among the various tragic poets who took part in the annual contests of this period, a group of seven were distinguished from the rest by the superior brilliance of their poetry, and hence acquired the name of 'the Pleiad[1].' One of them was Philiscus, the priest of Dionysus, and president of the Alexandrian Guild of Actors[2]. A second was the grammarian Homer, whose exceptional name is apparently to be ascribed to the literary tastes of his mother, an epic poetess[3]. Alexander, a third member, and also a grammarian, was chiefly famous as being the person who made the collection of tragedies and satyric plays for the Alexandrian Library[4]. Lycophron, likewise a grammarian, and member of the Pleiad, was the author of that 'dark poem,' the Alexandra, which still survives, with its obscure mythological allusions[5]. Among his lesser productions were certain complimentary anagrams on the names

[1] Suidas v. Ὅμηρος· διὸ συνηριθμήθη τοῖς ἑπτὰ οἱ τὰ δευτερεῖα τῶν τραγικῶν ἔχουσι (i.e. rank second to the five poets of the Alexandrian canon) καὶ ἐκλήθησαν τῆς Πλειάδος. Cp. Schol. Hephaest. pp. 53 and 185 (Gaisford); Tzetzes, vita Lycophr. (Westermann, p. 142. 4 &c.).

[2] Suidas v. Φίλισκος (3). Athen. p. 198. He was a native of Corcyra, and wrote forty-two tragedies (Suidas, l. c.). He claimed to be the inventor of the Philiscian metre, as it was called (Hephaest. c. 9, who quotes one of his lines — καινογραφοῦς συνθέσεως τῆς Φιλίσκου, γραμματικοί, δῶρα φέρω πρὸς ὑμᾶς). His portrait, in a meditative attitude, was painted by the great artist Protogenes (Plin. Hist. Nat. 35. 10. 36). His fragments in Nauck, p. 819.

[3] He was a native of Byzantium, where his statue was to be seen as late as 500 A.D. (Anthol. Pal. 2. 407 ff.). His father was Andromachus, the philologist, and his mother Myro, the poetess (Suidas v. Ὅμηρος). He wrote forty-five or fifty-five tragedies (Suid. l. c., Tzetzes vit. Lycoph.), and was said to have been assisted in their composition by Timon the Sceptic (Diog. Laert. 9. 113). He also composed a poem called Eurypyleia (Tzetzes, Schol. Hesiod, p. 3 Heinsius).

[4] Suidas, v. Ἀλέξανδρος. Cramer, Anecd. Graec. 1. p. 6. He was a native of Aetolia, and lived for some time at the court of Antigonus Gonatas in Macedonia (Suidas l. c.; Aratus, ed. Buhle, 2. p. 444). He wrote various kinds of poetry, in addition to his tragedies (Athen. p. 170, 296, 620, &c. Gellius, 15. 20). His fragments in Nauck, p. 877.

[5] τὸ σκοτεινὸν ποίημα (Suidas v. Λυκόφρων). He was a native of Chalcis in Euboea (Suidas l. c.), and wrote forty-six or sixty-four tragedies (Tzetzes, Hypoth. ad Lycoph.); also a satyric play in ridicule of his countryman Menedemus, the philosopher (Diog. Laert. 2. 133). Ovid (Ibis 533) says he was killed by an arrow.

of the king and queen, by which he acquired great favour at the court, and was consequently entrusted with the task of collecting the comedies for the Library[1]. Sositheus, also one of the Pleiad, is now chiefly known from the epigram in the Anthology, where he is praised for the antique vigour of his satyric dramas, in which he abandoned the 'innovations of later art,' and restored the 'masculine Doric rhythm and bold language' of Pratinas[2]. The other members who composed the seven are not known with certainty, the two vacant places being assigned to four different claimants, all equally obscure[3].

Concerning the tragedies of this once famous constellation of poets little has been recorded. Probably, if they survived, they would be found to possess the usual characteristics of Alexandrian poetry, and to be conspicuous for learning and scholarly finish rather than for dramatic genius. The authors themselves, as we see, were philologists and grammarians rather than poets; and of the nine whose names appear in the various lists, only two, Philiscus and Sosiphanes, devoted themselves to dramatic composition alone. The rest, in addition to their services in the Library, were employed in the compilation of various learned works; and the plays which they composed in their leisure hours are not likely to have risen to a high level of excellence.

[1] Cramer, Anecd. Graec. 1. p. 6. He wrote a book περὶ κωμῳδίας (Athen. p. 278). Tzetzes (vita Lycoph.) gives two of his anagrams, viz. Πτολεμαῖος = ἀπὸ μέλιτος and Ἀρσινόη = ἴον Ἥρας. For the titles of his plays and fragments see Suidas l. c., and Nauck, pp. 817, 818.

[2] Anthol. Pal. 7. 707. His birthplace was variously given (Suidas, v. Σωσίθεος); he wrote prose as well as poetry (ibid.); and in one of his plays he introduced a line (ὡς ἡ Κλεάνθους μωρία βοηλατεῖ) ridiculing Cleanthes, the head of the Stoic school at Athens (Diog. Laert. 7. 123).

[3] There are three authorities for the Pleiad, viz. Suidas, Choeroboscus (in Schol. Hephaest. p. 185 Gaisford), and Schol. Hephaest. p. 53. All these three agree with one another as to the five names mentioned in the text, but differ about the others, which are given as follows—Sosiphanes and Dionysiades (Suidas), Dionysiades and Aeantides (Schol. Hephaest.), Sosiphanes and Aeantides *or* Dionysiades and Euphronius (Choeroboscus). Concerning these four poets see Appendix I. The authority of Tzetzes (Vit. Lycoph.) on the subject of the Pleiad is quite valueless. He includes in it several of the poets already specified, and then proceeds to add, apparently by his own conjecture, four writers who are not otherwise known to have had any connexion with tragedy, viz. Theocritus, Aratus, Nicander, and Apollonius Rhodius.

With the close of Ptolemy the Second's reign, and the disappearance of the Pleiad, Alexandrian tragedy ceased to be distinguished by any superior qualities from that of other places. The drama was no doubt still cultivated with the usual splendour, but has left few traces of its course. Ptolemy the Fourth, who ascended the throne towards the end of the third century, wrote a tragedy called Adonis[1]; and Tlepolemus, while regent of Egypt at the commencement of the next reign, is said to have squandered the resources of the kingdom upon theatrical shows[2]. Later on we find the Guild of Actors at Paphos enrolled under the patronage of Ptolemy Euergetes[3]; and we are told that in the time of Cicero and Varro all kinds of drama—tragedy, comedy, and satyric play—were regularly exhibited at Alexandria[4]. But with this piece of information the series of notices comes to an end[5].

§ 6. *Character of the Post-Alexandrian Tragedy.*

After the decline of the Alexandrian theatre there is little to attract attention in the subsequent history of Greek tragedy, and the records of its career which have been preserved are so meagre and insignificant that detailed description becomes impossible. It will be sufficient, therefore, in the next few pages to consider the subject from a general point of view, and to draw attention to one or two of the more prominent features which appear to have characterised the dramatic activity of this later period.

(1) *The Composition of New Tragedies.*

We have seen that the compositions of the Pleiad were the last examples of original work which attracted general notice on account of their artistic pretensions. The extinction of the

[1] Schol. Aristoph. Thesm. 1059.
[2] Polyb. 16. 21.
[3] Corp. Ins. Graec. 2620.
[4] Fulgentius, Mythologicon, 1. p. 609.
[5] It is said that Caracalla in the year 217 A. D., during his oppression of the people of Alexandria, τὰς θέας διέλυσε, which would of course include dramatic spectacles (Dion Cas. 77. 23). But this prohibition would only be operative during his own lifetime.

Pleiad completed the literary downfall of the tragic drama. After this date the new tragedies which continued to appear upon the stage were so devoid of merit that they rapidly passed into obscurity, and their fame was completely thrown into the shade by the masterpieces of ancient times. Still, it is a mistake to suppose that, because the quality was defective, there was any immediate cessation in the supply. The production of original tragedies during these final centuries appears to have been far more abundant, and to have lasted down to a far later epoch, than is generally imagined. Even at the close of the first century of the Christian era it had not been entirely discontinued, as we may infer from a remark of Dion Chrysostomus, who, in alluding to this very subject, merely observes that the 'majority' of the plays then seen upon the stage were of ancient date, and implies that some of them were still written by contemporaries[1]. Lucian, who flourished about a century afterwards, is the first ancient author who asserts without any qualification that the composition of original dramas had become a thing of the past[2].

The statements of these two writers, which, if taken in combination, would assign the termination of the literary career of tragedy to a date not anterior to the reign of Hadrian, are confirmed by other indications. In Athens, for example, it is evident from a long series of inscriptions that 'original tragedies' continued to figure as the principal feature of the City Dionysia down to the Christian era[3]. The celebration

[1] Dion Chrysost. orat. 19 *ἥ τε φωνὴ (τῶν ὑποκριτῶν) μείζων . . . ἥ τε λέξις οὐκ αὐτοσχέδιος . . . ἀλλὰ ποιητῶν ἐπιμελῶς καὶ κατὰ σχολὴν πεπονηκότων. καὶ τά γε πολλὰ αὐτῶν ἀρχαῖά ἐστι καὶ πολὺ σοφωτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἢ τῶν νῦν.* His language in orat. 57 is not inconsistent with the occasional exhibition of new plays, but only implies that old plays were constantly reproduced (*καὶ γὰρ ἄτοπον εἰ Σωκράτης μὲν τοὺς ἐν Λυκείῳ ῥηθέντας λόγους ὀλίγον μεταβὰς ἀπήγγελλε τοῖς ἐν Ἀκαδημείᾳ . . . καὶ τοσοῦτος ἤδη χρόνος ἐστὶν ἐξ οὗ τὰς αὐτὰς διδάσκουσι τραγῳδίας καὶ κωμῳδίας· ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτοπον δόξομεν ποιεῖν . . . τοὺς ῥηθέντας ἀπαγγέλλοντες κ.τ.λ.*).

[2] Encom. Demosth. 27 *καὶ τῷ Διονύσῳ τὸ μὲν ποίησιν καινὴν ποιεῖν ἐκλέλειπται, τὰ δὲ προτέροις συντεθέντα τοῖς νῦν εἰς μέσον ἐν καιρῷ κομίζουσι χάριν οὐκ ἐλάττω φέρει.* Id. de Salt. 27 (of the tragic actor) *καὶ μόνης τῆς φωνῆς ὑπεύθυνον παρέχων ἑαυτόν· τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα τοῖς ποιητοῖς ἐμέλησε πρὸ πολλοῦ ποτε γιγνομένοις.*

[3] See the long series of inscriptions about the proclamation of crowns at

of the festival, it is true, was often intermitted, owing to wars, and poverty, and other circumstances[1]; but when no such obstacle intervened, and it was held as usual, the contemporary poets were called upon to exhibit their productions. The names of many of these dramatists have been preserved, and among them that of a certain Sophocles, a tragic writer of the second century, and author of fifteen plays, who is especially interesting as being a descendant of the great Sophocles[2]. Several other tragic and satyric poets, all citizens of Athens, and varying in date from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D., appear in inscriptions as victors at dramatic contests, or as members of the Athenian Guild of Actors[3].

As for the other parts of Greece, there is evidence that new tragedies were exhibited at Magnesia in Lydia, at Cyzicus in Phrygia, and at Aphrodisias in Caria, as late as the imperial epoch[4]. In Boeotia such performances were especially common. At five out of the six Boeotian festivals new tragedies and satyric dramas appear as a regular part of the programme during a period extending down to the close of the first century A.D.[5] In the second century, however, they are omitted from

the City Dionysia in Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 251–479. They begin about 310 B.C., and extend to about 40 B.C. The phrase used at first is *τραγῳδῶν τῷ ἀγῶνι* or *τραγῳδοῖς τῷ ἀγῶνι*, without any addition. But after about 260 B.C. the formula is changed into *τραγῳδῶν τῷ καινῷ ἀγῶνι*, or simply *τῷ καινῷ ἀγῶνι* or *καινοῖς τραγῳδοῖς*. The inference is obvious, that new tragedies were regularly produced on these occasions; and the phrase cannot be explained as a mere mechanical retention of an old formula, since, as a matter of fact, it is not found in the inscriptions before 260 B.C. Cp. also the decree of the Athenian colonists at Hephaestia in Lemnos (date about 220 B.C.), where the distinction between the *καινὸς ἀγών* of the Athenian Dionysia, and the mere *ἀγών* of the Hephaestian festival, is clearly marked (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 592 *ἀνειπεῖν τὸν στέφανον ἐν μὲν Ἀθήναις Διονυσίων τῶν μεγάλων τραγῳδῶν τῷ καινῷ ἀγῶνι . . . ἐν Ἡφαιστίᾳ δὲ Διονυσίων τραγῳδῶν τῷ ἀγῶνι*).

[1] Cp. the records of the City Dionysia in Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 975 (the earlier half of the second century B.C.), where the phrase *οὐκ ἐγένετο* is of frequent occurrence.

[2] Suidas v. *Σοφοκλῆς* (3). He won the prize for tragedy at the Orchomenian Charitesia on one occasion (Corp. Ins. Gr. 1584).

[3] Viz. Xenocrates, Timon, Thymoteles, Isagoras, Heracleides, Artemon, and Philostratus; concerning whom see Appendix I.

[4] Corp. Ins. Graec. 2759, 5919. Mittheil. des deutschen archaeol. Instituts in Athen, 1894, pp. 96, 97.

[5] Viz. the *Χαριτήσια* (Orchomenus), *Σεραπιεῖα* (Tanagra), *Μουσεῖα* (Thes-

the lists[1]; and this fact coincides with the inference already drawn from Lucian and Dion Chrysostomus as to the date when original dramas ceased to be composed.

The profession of the playwright during this period of decadence no longer offered any attractions to an author of genius. The poets who continued to provide for the requirements of the theatre were mostly hack writers, employed in the service of the various companies of actors[2]. Their names occur not unfrequently in the records of dramatic contests, but little or nothing is known about their history. One of the most conspicuous was Euphantus, the Olynthian, and instructor of king Antigonus, who won the victory at several tragic contests during the third century[3]. Some celebrity was also acquired by Dymas of Iasus, a tragic poet of the second century, who produced a play at Samothrace in honour of the national hero Dardanus, and met with so much success, that he was rewarded with a crown and the privilege of citizenship[4]. The last of all the poets whom we can suppose to have written for the stage is a certain Gaius Julius, a member of a travelling company of Greek actors under the patronage of Hadrian, to whom a statue was voted in the year 127 A. D. for his 'eloquence and devotion to the interests of the society[5].'

While the regular playwright pursued his vocation under the patronage of the actors, literary men occasionally amused themselves with the composition of dramas, which were not, however,

piae), Σωτήρια (Acraephiae), and Ἀμφιαράϊα (Oropus). For the references to the records concerning these festivals see p. 436, note 3.

[1] Compare Corp. Ins. Graec. 1585 (the Μουσεῖα in the first century A. D.) with ibid. 1586 (the same festival in the second century A. D.).

[2] Thus the Guild of Actors at Ptolemais contained two τραγῳδιῶν ποιηταί among its members.

[3] Diog. Laert. 2. 110. He also wrote histories, and a treatise περὶ βασιλείας for the benefit of his royal pupil. Athen. p. 251 quotes from his histories a reference to Ptolemy the Third (247–222 B. C.), which shows that his pupil must have been Antigonus Doson (born 262 B. C.).

[4] Inscrip. Musei Brit. ed. Newton, part 3, 441.

[5] Le Bas, Asie Mineure, 1619 ἔδοξε τῇ ἱερᾷ συνόδῳ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης περὶ τὸν Αὐτοκράτορα Τραιανὸν . . . ἐπειδὴ Γάϊος Ἰούλιος, Γαΐου υἱός, ἀγαθὸς ἀτελὴς τραγῳδιῶν ποιητής, ἀνὴρ παντὸς λόγου . . . λογιότητα τὴν ἀδιάλειπτον εὔνοιάν τε καὶ σπουδὴν εἰς τὴν ἱερὰν σύνοδον . . . ἐτίμησεν αὐτὸν εἰκόνι, κ.τ.λ.

intended for representation. To this class belong philosophers like Timon the Sceptic[1], and Oenomaus the Cynic[2], and rhetoricians such as Scopelianus[3], and the elder Philostratus[4], all of whom wrote numerous tragedies in addition to their other works. Nicolaus of Damascus, the famous historian, and friend of Herod the Great, also composed tragic dramas, and among them one on the subject of Daniel and Susannah—a literary curiosity which is not likely to have been presented in a Greek theatre[5].

(2) *The Reproduction of Old Tragedies.*

During the early history of the classical drama the practice of reviving and re-exhibiting old tragedies was far less frequent than in modern times, being mainly confined to the smaller and less important townships. Great cities like Athens, having only one or two dramatic festivals to provide for in the course of the entire year, preferred to signalise such occasions by the production of new and original compositions[6]. But with the progress of time, when a long list of standard plays by famous authors had been gradually accumulated, while the genius of the later poets showed evident traces of exhaustion, the tendency to recur to the past, in order to supply the stage with dramas, naturally became more and more prevalent[7]. Even as early

[1] Diog. Laert. 9. 110 says he wrote thirty comedies and sixty tragedies, as well as satyric dramas. He was a native of Phlius, but lived mostly at Athens, where he flourished at the beginning of the third century B. C. He is said to have helped Alexander of Aetolia and Homer (the member of the Pleiad) in their tragedies (Diog. Laert. 9. 12).

[2] Julian, Orat. 7, p. 110. He lived in the time of Hadrian.

[3] Philostrat. Vit. Soph. 1. 21. 5. He taught rhetoric at Smyrna in the time of Domitian.

[4] He was father of the great Philostratus; practised rhetoric at Athens in the time of Nero; and wrote various works, including forty-three tragedies, and three books *περὶ τραγῳδίας* (Suidas, v. *Φιλόστρατος ὁ πρῶτος*).

[5] Suidas, v. *Νικόλαος Δαμασκηνός*. Eustath., Dionys. Perieg. 980.

[6] See the Attic Theatre, pp. 92, 93.

[7] The technical term for the protagonist who superintended these reproductions of old tragedies appears to have been *τραγῳδός*. Thus in most inscriptions the *τραγῳδός* or *τραγῳδὸς παλαιᾶς τραγῳδίας* is opposed to the *ποιητής* and *ὑποκριτής* of the new tragedies (cp. Corp. Ins. Graec. 1584, 1585, 1587; Keil, Sylloge Inscrip. Boeot. p. 60; Rangabè, Antiq. Hellén., vol. ii, no. 965). But the distinction was not always observed, and in some cases the actor of an old tragedy is called *ὑποκριτής* (e. g. Ephem. Archaeol. 1884, p. 124; Lüders, die Dionysischen Künstler, p. 187).

as the fourth century the Athenians themselves, as already stated, had begun to consider the exhibition of old tragedies as a regular part of their dramatic spectacles[1]. The custom soon spread over the whole of Greece; and when we reach the post-Alexandrian epoch we find that these reproductions of ancient works had come to be the main attraction of the tragic stage, and that there were few if any festivals from which they were altogether excluded, while in a large number of cases they constituted by themselves the whole of the performance[2].

The question as to the names and authors of the plays which were thus chosen for revival is one of great interest, though the information on the subject is unfortunately far from copious. But it appears to be certain that from an early period the selection was limited to the works of the three great dramatists, in conformity with that feeling of exclusive veneration which their genius had inspired[3]. Even this range of choice, however, though sufficiently restricted, would seem to have been too extensive for the taste of later generations, and in course of time the list of available poets was still further reduced. First of all Aeschylus began to drop into the background[4]; then Sophocles shared the same fate; and finally Euripides was left without a rival in popular regard. Not that we

[1] Attic Theatre, pp. 96–100.

[2] Thus we learn from inscriptions that only old tragedies were performed at the following festivals—the older Charitesia at Orchomenus (Corp. Ins. Graec. 1583); the Homoloïa at Orchomenus (ibid. 1584); one of the festivals at Aphrodisias (ibid. 2758); the Delphic Soteria (Luders, l. c., p. 187 ff.); the Dionysia at Hephaestia in Lemnos (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 592).

[3] This is proved by the fact that, while the references to the reproduction of old tragedies are fairly numerous in the ancient writers, the only poets whose names are ever mentioned in this connexion are Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

[4] The plays of Aeschylus were constantly reproduced during the latter part of the fifth century (see the Attic Theatre, pp. 94, 95). But in the fourth century his popularity had declined, and only one of his tragedies is mentioned as appearing on the stage, viz. the Propompi (ibid. p. 98). The popular authors at this time were Sophocles and Euripides, as may be seen from the frequent allusions to the revival of their plays. The following dramas are cited as favourites in the theatre—the Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus Coloneus, Ajax, Electra, Antigone, and Epigoni of Sophocles; and the Orestes, Iphigeneia, Hecuba, Phoenissae, Supplices, Cresphontes, and Oenomaus of Euripides (ibid. pp. 99, 100).

should suppose that either Aeschylus or Sophocles disappeared entirely from the stage, even during the latest period, or that they lost all hold upon the affections of theatrical audiences; otherwise it would be difficult to account for the frequent adaptation of their plays by the Roman dramatists, who were essentially practical playwrights, and who are not likely to have imitated works which had ceased to be regarded as acting dramas[1]. Still, it is a significant fact that after the end of the fourth century there is no certain allusion to any representation of a play by Aeschylus, and only one such allusion in the case of Sophocles[2]; while Euripides, on the other hand, is frequently mentioned as a favourite in the theatre, and many of his writings are cited by name as forming a part of the regular stage repertory. Among the extant dramas we meet with the Hecuba, Bacchae, Hercules Furens, Orestes, Andromache, Ion, and Troades[3]; and several other plays which

[1] According to Ribbeck's conjectures (Römische Tragödie, p. 686) the number of plays adapted from the three great Attic poets by the early Roman dramatists was as follows. From Aeschylus—Livius 1, Ennius 1, Pacuvius 1, Accius 4. From Sophocles—Naevius 1, Livius 2, Pacuvius 4, Accius 9. From Euripides—Livius 1, Naevius 1, Pacuvius 4, Accius 6, Ennius 12.

[2] See the inscription reproduced by Kaibel (Hermes, 23, pp. 273-275), recording certain dramatic contests at Rhodes in the first century B.C. The inscription is in seven fragments, of which the collocation is somewhat doubtful. According to Kaibel's arrangement the part concerning Sophocles runs as follows—*Ἀλκίμαχος Ἀθ[ηναῖος Πηλ]έα Σοφοκλέους καὶ Ὀδυσσέ[α μαινόμενον κ]αὶ Ἴβηρας καὶ σατυρικὸν Τῆλε-φ[ον.* If the restoration is correct, it would show that three tragedies and a satyric play of Sophocles were produced together at Rhodes in the course of the first century B.C.—forming probably, as Kaibel conjectures, the identical group of plays which was originally exhibited at the City Dionysia by Sophocles himself. But in any case, whether the arrangement of the fragments be justified or not, there is enough in the inscription to show that *some* plays of Sophocles were represented in Rhodes at the time mentioned.

It is said that one of the parts played by Nero, in the course of his dramatic tour through Greece, was Oedipus (Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. 5. 7; Dion Cass. 63, 9 and 22): but whether the reference is to the play of Sophocles cannot be determined, since an Oedipus was written by several poets, including Aeschylus and Euripides.

[3] See Philostrat. Imag. 2. 23 (Hercules Furens). Dion Chrysost. Or. 10, Arg. Eur. Orest. (Orestes). Lucian, Nigrin. 11, de Salt. 26 (Hecuba). Id. de Salt. 27 (Andromache). Virg. Aen. 4. 470 (Bacchae). The Ion and the Troades are mentioned in Corp. Ins. Lat. 5. 2. 5889 as having been adapted for performance by a pantomimic actor, which may be taken as a proof that they were also frequently exhibited on the regular stage. Cp. also, as further evidence of

have now perished appear to have been no less acceptable to the general public[1]. The inference, therefore, is obvious, that among the Greeks of the Hellenistic era the reproduction of an ancient tragedy meant, for all practical purposes, a reproduction of Euripides.

In some cases the actors who superintended these revivals were contented with performing a mere selection from the tragedy, instead of the entire work. The custom was an ancient one, but had been confined originally to banquets and similar entertainments, where it was not unsuitable. Neoptolemus, the tragic actor, on the night before the assassination of Philip of Macedon, gave a performance of this kind to the assembled guests; and the passage which he chose for declamation, concerning the vanity and instability of human glory, was afterwards seen to have had an ominous significance[2]. But these selections soon began to be popular even in the theatre. Dion Chrysostomus speaks of the presentation of 'parts of tragedies' as the usual arrangement at the time in which he lived[3]; and Apollonius of Tyana, when visiting Athens during the Anthesteria, expected to be entertained, among other things, by a series of 'tragic monodies[4].' Although, however, the practice may have prevailed extensively at lesser festivals throughout the closing period of the drama, it is unnecessary to suppose that it

the popularity of the Bacchae, the fact that a *κιθάρισμα ἐκ Βακχῶν Εὐριπίδου* was given at Delphi in the course of the second century B.C. (Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, 1894, p. 85).

[1] The Hypsipyle (Athen. p. 343), Ino (Plut. de Sera Num. Vind. c. 11; Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. 7. 5), Palamedes (Polyaen. I proem. § 12), Oenomaus (Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. 5. 7), Creophontes (Id. 5. 7; Plut. de Esu Carn. c. 5), Erectheus (Lucian, Necyom. 16), Telephus (Max. Tyr. 7, p. 126; Synesius de Provid. p. 106 A; Lucian, Somnium seu Gallus 26), Alcmaeon (Dion Cass. 63, 9 and 22).

In addition to the above notices Lucian mentions several of the typical tragic heroes of the contemporary stage, most of whom were probably taken from the plays of Euripides, though the inference is not certain—viz. Agamemnon, Creon, and Hercules (Nigrin. 11), Polyxena, Achilles, Theseus, Helen (Piscat. 31), Cecrops, Creon, Priam (Necyom. 16), Sisyphus (Somn. seu Gall. 25). The same is the case with some of the parts which Nero is said to have played at the various Greek festivals, viz. Thyestes, Hercules, and Creon (Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. 5. 7; Dion Cass. 63. 9).

[2] Diod. Sic. 16. 92.

[3] Dion Chrysost. Or. 19 *τῆς δὲ τραγῳδίας τὰ μὲν ἰσχυρά, ὡς ἔοικε, μένει· λέγω δὲ τὰ ἰαμβεῖα· καὶ τούτων μέρη διεξίασιν ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις.*

[4] Philostrat. Vit. Apoll. 4. 21.

excluded the production of entire plays on more important occasions.

(3) *The Chorus.*

In the course of the preceding chapters we have traced the varying fortunes of the chorus down to the end of the fifth century. We have seen how the form of the drama was slowly evolved out of the old lyrical dances of the satyrs; how, as the dramatic element advanced, the chorus declined in proportion; how it was gradually stripped of the most important of its functions, and driven further and further out of notice, until at length, in many of the later plays of Euripides, it sank to a position of comparative obscurity; its songs lost their intimate connexion with the plot, its speeches were restricted to a few brief maxims, and its musical duets with the actors were replaced to a large extent by the more popular monodies and stage lyrics. In the following century little is known about the condition of the chorus beyond the statement mentioned by Aristotle, that the choral odes were now converted into regular interludes, and ceased to form an integral portion of the tragedy[1]. This single fact, however, is of the highest significance, as showing that in one respect, at any rate, the process commenced by Euripides had been carried still further by his successors. Whence we may infer, without much hesitation, that his other innovations were copied and exaggerated in the same manner; and that the speeches and musical dialogues of the chorus shared the same fate as the lyrical odes, and were reduced to insignificant proportions. If this was the case, the chorus of the fourth century must have had little more connexion with the real movement of the play than the band of musicians in a modern theatre.

When we pursue the investigation down to a later date, and begin to consider the fate of the tragic chorus after the decline of the Athenian theatre, a new question arises, and the point which has now to be determined is, not so much whether it retained any of its old importance, as whether it still continued

[1] Aristot. Poet. c. 18.

to exist at all, or was finally abolished. On this subject the testimony of the ancient records is somewhat conflicting. Dion Chrysostomus, writing at the end of the first century of the Christian era, states expressly that in his time the choral part of tragedy had disappeared, and that only the iambic dialogue was retained[1]. His statement is confirmed by official records of a much earlier date, which prove that the practice of dispensing with the chorus must have begun to prevail, at any rate occasionally, even in the third and second centuries B.C. Thus in the list of performers at the Delphic Soteria in the third century, while the comic actors are invariably accompanied by a chorus of seven members, the actors of tragedy have no such retinue[2]; and in the last of the Delian inscriptions, which refers to the year 172 B.C., the name of the tragic choregus is omitted, though in all the previous notices his name had been inserted side by side with that of the tragic actor[3].

On the other hand there is ample evidence to show that throughout the whole of this period, and even as late as the time of Dion himself, the chorus was not unfrequently retained. The performances at the Dionysiac festival of Iasus, in the second century B.C., though consisting chiefly of dramas, are described as 'choral performances[4].' A chorus of several members took part in the exhibition of the Bacchae at the court of Artavasdes, when the scene with the head of Crassus occurred[5]. In the list of moneys supplied for a Carian festival during the imperial epoch, provision is made for a 'tragic chorus,' as well as for tragic actors[6]. An Athenian inscription

[1] Dion Chrysost. Or. 19 τῆς δὲ τραγῳδίας τὰ μὲν ἰσχυρά, ὡς ἔοικε, μένει· λέγω δὲ τὰ ἰαμβεῖα . . . τὰ δὲ μαλακώτερα ἐξερρύηκε τὰ περὶ τὰ μέλη.

[2] Wescher et Foucart, Inscr. de Delphes, 1886, nos. 3–6.

[3] Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique, vol. 7. pp. 103–123; vol. 9. p. 147 ff.

[4] Le Bas, Asie Mineure, no. 281. Cp. also the frequent mention of χορηγοί in connexion with the tragic performances at the Iasian Dionysia (ibid. nos. 256 and 258). A χορηγὸς τραγῳδοῖς also appears as victor at the Ἀλεξανδρεῖα and Διονύσια in Rhodes (Loewy, Archaeolog.-epigr. Mittheil. aus Oestreich, vol. 7. p. 111).

[5] Plut. Crassus, c. 33.

[6] χορῷ τραγικῷ (Le Bas, Asie Mineure, 1620 d). In Corp. Ins. Graec. 2759 (an earlier publication) the entry appears as χοροκιθαρεῖ τραγικῷ. But whichever reading be correct, the evidence is decisive for the employment of a tragic chorus.

of the first century A.D. records the skill of a certain Eucarpus in 'tragic and comic choruses[1]'; and Maximus Tyrius, a philosophical writer of the following century, speaks of choral songs as an ordinary feature in a dramatic exhibition[2]. Vitruvius, in his description of the Greek theatre, observes that in addition to the tragic and comic actors upon the stage there were 'other performers' in the orchestra[3]. Moreover, the retention of the chorus by the early Roman drama points to the fact that it had not as yet been excluded from the tragedy of the Greeks[4]. We have seen, also, that the representation of satyric plays continued to flourish down to the end of the first century A.D.; and it is scarcely possible to suppose that performances of this type were unaccompanied by a troop of satyrs[5]. Finally, in the painting in a certain catacomb at Cyrene, which depicts the various competitors at a funeral celebration, the tragic actors are attended by a chorus consisting of seven members—a number which coincides exactly with the seven comic choroutae of the Delphic inscriptions[6].

It would appear, then, from a comparison of the various testimonies which have just been enumerated, that there was no universal rule about the chorus during the time of which we are now speaking, but that it was sometimes preserved and sometimes abandoned, according to circumstances. The question was probably one of economy. As the presence of the chorus meant a considerable addition to the expense, it may have been discarded at the minor festivals as an unnecessary luxury, while employed to give greater dignity to the more important gatherings. As to the significance of the part

[1] Corp. Ins. Att. 3. 68 b *ἄρχων Διονυσόδωρος Εὐκάρπου τέχνης | πάσης με κῦδος κωμικῆς τραγικῆς χορῶν | τὸν δειθύραμβον τρίποδα θῆκ' Ἀσκληπιῷ.*

[2] Max. Tyr., Dissert. 7. 1 *εἰ δέ τις ἡγεῖται τι αὐτῷ εἶναι δρᾶμα πολιτικόν, οὐκ ἰαμβείων οὐδὲ ᾀσμάτων χορῷ εἰς ἁρμονίαν συνταχθέντων κ.τ.λ.*

[3] Vitruv. 5. 7.

[4] On the chorus in Roman tragedy see Ribbeck, Römische Tragödie, p. 637 ff.; Otto Jahn, in Hermes, 1867, p. 227 ff.

[5] The chorus of satyrs is actually mentioned in connexion with the satyric plays of Sositheus and Lycophron, the poets of the Alexandrian Pleiad (Anthol. Pal. 7, 707; Athen. p. 420). On the prevalence of the satyric drama in the latest times see p. 394, note 4.

[6] Wieseler's Denkmäler des Bühnenwesens, plate 13, no. 2.

assigned to it in the performances at which it was still retained, there is little or no evidence. But the analogy of its previous history may justify the conclusion that its functions were now confined within the narrowest limits, and that in the composition of original dramas it was treated as a kind of musical interlude, while in the case of the old tragedies the text was so manipulated as to exclude it, as far as possible, from all participation in the dialogue or interference with the plot. This view seems to be supported by the painting in the catacomb at Cyrene, in which the tragic chorus, instead of being dressed in character, appears in the same conventional costume as the dithyrambic choristers, and cannot therefore be supposed to have taken a conspicuous part in the action of the drama[1].

§ 7. *Greek Tragedy in Italy.*

Of the various remoter districts into which Greek tragedy was introduced there are none, perhaps, in which it was welcomed with more enthusiasm than in the prosperous Greek colonies of South Italy and Campania. The luxury of these cities, and the frequency of their amusements, were proverbial; and their special fondness for dramatic shows is proved by the character of their vases, of which they were noted manufacturers, and in which the favourite form of ornamentation is a painting of some theatrical scene[2]. From an early period cities such as Rhegium, Naples, and Tarentum appear to have become important centres of dramatic activity[3]; and actors from these parts figure very frequently in records of contests in various parts of Greece[4].

The theatrical entertainments of this district have a peculiar interest, because of the part which they played in spreading

[1] Wieseler, l. c.

[2] See Baumeister's Denkmäler des klassischen Alterthums, vol. 3, p. 2006.

[3] A guild of Greek actors was established at Naples (Lüders, die Dionys. Künstler, p. 185; Plut. Brutus, c. 21), and at Rhegium (Corp. Ins. Graec. 5762), and probably also at Tarentum, though there is no direct evidence. On the popularity of the theatre among the people of Tarentum see Dion Cass. frag. 39. 5 (vol. 1, p. 55 Dindorf).

[4] E.g. Lüders, l. c., pp. 185, 191, 196.

Hellenic culture among the Romans. The Romans, it is well known, derived their first taste for Hellenic art and literature from their constant intercourse with these Italian Greeks; and the drama was the chief instrument by which that taste was disseminated. Its paramount attractiveness is proved by the fact that, of the various kinds of artistic poetry, it was the first to be actually imitated in Latin. And there can be no doubt as to the source of its introduction among the Romans, when we remember that all the earlier Latin dramatists were either Greeks of South Italy, or Roman natives of the same region. Livius, the father of the Latin stage, was a Greek slave captured at Tarentum[1]; Ennius, who is described as a 'half-Greek,' came from a town in the immediate neighbourhood[2]; Pacuvius was born at Brundisium, and Naevius in Campania[3].

It might have been expected that these performances of Greek tragedy on Italian soil would have been brought to an end by the Roman conquest of Southern Italy. But such was far from being the case. The colonies of Magna Graecia, after losing their political independence, were not immediately Latinised by contact with their victorious neighbours, but retained their native language and institutions for many centuries afterwards. Hence their tragic drama continued to flourish under the new régime as vigorously as under the old[4]; indeed, its sphere was extended by the change of government. Instead of being confined, as of old, to a few Greek communities, it was adopted in various Roman cities, and especially in Rome itself, where it soon obtained a regular footing side by side with the Latin tragedy to which it had given birth. Nor is there any reason for surprise in this naturalisation of a foreign theatre. The population of Rome always included a large number of Greek freedmen, together with Greek visitors and residents, to whom the representation of plays in

[1] Cic. Brutus, § 72.

[2] Suetonius, de Grammaticis, § 1; Strabo, 6. p. 281.

[3] Gellius, 1. 24, 13. 2.

[4] Cp. the decree of the Company of Greek actors at Naples in the second century A. D. (Lüders, p. 185).

their national language would be especially attractive. Moreover, the knowledge of Greek was so essential an element of culture among the Romans themselves, that a Greek company in Rome, like a French company in London, would find a sufficiency of auditors even among the natives.

The earliest recorded instance of Greek plays at Rome is in the year 186 B.C., when they formed part of the games given by Fulvius in honour of his Aetolian campaign[1]. Not long afterwards Anicius, on his conquest of Illyria, provided shows of great splendour, including Greek performances of every kind; and the occasion was rendered memorable by the extraordinary conduct of the victorious general, a Roman of the old-fashioned type, who, failing to appreciate the beauty of the musical and dramatic competitions, proceeded to impart more liveliness to the entertainment, by compelling the various actors to engage in a hand-to-hand fight in the orchestra[2]. After this time Greek plays seem to have been generally included in the principal Italian festivals. They were frequently exhibited by Julius Caesar and by Augustus[3]; and Brutus, when praetor, went in person to Naples, to secure for his shows the best Greek actors in the Neapolitan company[4]. Even as late as the second century A.D. we hear of contests in Greek tragedy as a regular institution at Rome[5]; and chance has preserved the name of one of the victors, an actor from Byzantium, who obtained the prize about the year 195[6]. The guild of Greek actors was also still flourishing in the Roman capital at the same date; and Evodianus, the

[1] Livy, 39. 22.

[2] Polybius, 30. 13.

[3] Sueton. Iul. 39, Octav. 43.

[4] Plut. Brutus, c. 21. As a further proof of the frequency of Greek tragedy in Rome cp. the story in Dion Cassius (60, 29) of a certain performance in the theatre, when the line *ἀφόρητός ἐστιν εὐτυχῶν μαστιγίας* was eagerly caught up by the people and applied to Polybius, the freedman of Claudius. Cp. also the private theatricals instituted by Nero, at which Roman nobles were compelled 'Graeci Latinique histrionis exercere artem' (Tac. Ann. 14. 15).

[5] Artemidorus (a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius) speaks of *τραγῳδῶν ἀγῶνες ἐν Ῥώμῃ* (4. 33). Cp. the inscription, of unknown date, upon an actor's tomb in the Appian Road, where there occurs, among the list of victories, *Ῥώμην τραγῳδοῖς* (Corp. Ins. Graec. 5919).

[6] Philostrat. Vit. Soph. 2. 27. 2.

professor of rhetoric, who was appointed head of their society, is said to have found them 'vain and difficult to manage[1].'

§ 8. *Final Extinction of Greek Tragedy.*

After the custom of producing original tragedies had gradually died out during the reign of Hadrian and his successors, the works of the old Attic poets, and especially those of Euripides, henceforth obtained sole possession of the tragic stage. How long they managed to retain their position, and to preserve their rank as a recognised form of public entertainment, is the question which we have lastly to consider. It was not, indeed, to be expected that, amid the decay of literary taste and artistic feeling which had now begun to prevail, the grandeur and dignity of these ancient dramas should continue much longer to be appreciated by the multitude. Still, it is interesting to notice that their hold upon the theatre, after having been maintained intact for nearly six hundred years, was not relaxed without a struggle, and that the process which led to their exclusion from the stage was protracted over a long period of time. During the second century they appear to have been still produced with almost as much frequency as at any previous epoch. The constant references of Lucian, and various other testimonies which it is needless to specify, leave no doubt upon this point[2]. Even in the third century they must have held their ground to a considerable extent, since Philostratus, an author of the period, in speaking about the Hercules Furens of Euripides, remarks that it was still 'often to be seen in theatres[3].' But in the course of the next two or three generations a change took place, and the ancient tragedies were superseded by entertainments of a more sensuous kind. Libanius, the Greek rhetorician, writing in the middle of the fourth century, makes some instructive remarks upon the

[1] Philostrat. Vit. Soph. 2. 16.

[2] The allusions in Lucian to the performances of tragedy, and to the appearance of the tragic actors upon the stage, are extremely common, e.g De Saltatione 27, Anacharsis 23, Somnium seu Gallus 26, Nigrinus 11, Piscator 31, Necyomantia 16. Cp. also Polyaenus, I proem. § 12; Philostrat. Vit. Soph. 2. 16 and 27; Artemidorus, 4. 33; Corp. Ins. Graec. 1586, &c.

[3] Philostrat. Imag. 2. 23.

subject. After observing that 'in former times the people acquired their knowledge of mythology from the performances of tragic dramas,' he proceeds to add that 'although tragedy has now disappeared from the stage, and been confined to the schoolroom, its place is taken with so much success by pantomime, that the artisan can still hold his own with the schoolboy in discussing the legends of Priam and Laius, and other mythical heroes[1].'

This interesting passage fixes the date at which the acting of Greek tragedy practically fell into abeyance. Not that even then it ceased at once, or universally. Libanius himself, in the course of the very same work from which we have just quoted, supplies a proof that it was not yet entirely defunct, when he argues that, if pantomime is to be prohibited, tragedy must be excluded from the theatre at the same time[2]. Moreover Synesius, an Egyptian bishop at the beginning of the fifth century, speaks of tragic dramas as still exhibited upon the stage, and describes the character of the performance[3]. Claudian, writing at the same date, includes the 'strains of tragedy' among the entertainments in vogue at Constantinople[4]. And Chrysostom, his contemporary, and archbishop of Constantinople, declares in one of his homilies that gorgeous raiment is more suitable to 'tragic actors, mimes, and gladiators' than to Christian women[5]. But although, as we see from these passages, tragedy was still performed on rare occasions even as late as the fifth century, it no longer possessed any attraction for the mass of the people. Its popularity was confined to limited audiences; and its retention at a few great festivals is probably to be ascribed to the ambition of distinguished officials,

[1] Libanius, πρὸς Ἀριστείδην, 3, p. 391 Reiske.

[2] Id. 3, p. 391 Reiske.

[3] De Provid. p. 106 καθάπερ ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ὁρῶμεν τοὺς τῆς τραγῳδίας ὑποκριτάς· ὅστις καλῶς ἐξήσκησε τὴν φωνήν, ὁμοίως ὑποκρίνεται τόν τε Κρέοντα καὶ τὸν Τήλεφον κ.τ.λ. De Regn. p. 4 ἀλλ' ὁρᾷς γὰρ τίσι βίωσι αἱ τραγῳδῶν σκηναὶ κεχορήγηνται.

[4] In Eutrop. 363 'hi tragicos meminere modos: his fabula Tereus, | his necdum commissa choro cantatur Agave.'

[5] Homil. X ad Coloss. ἡ γὰρ πολυτέλεια τῆς σκηνῆς ἁρμόζει τραγῳδοῖς, τοῖς ὑποκριταῖς, τοῖς μίμοις, τοῖς ὀρχησταῖς, τοῖς πρὸς τὰ θηρία μαχομένοις· γυναικὶ δὲ πιστῇ ἑτέρα δέδοται ἱμάτια παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ.

who desired to surpass their rivals in the splendour of their shows, and were careful to omit nothing which had ever been included in the programme of amusements.

The taste of the general public, in this later epoch, was monopolised by two entertainments of a very different kind—the mime and the pantomime—of which it may be useful to give a brief description, because of the light which they throw upon the manners of the age[1]. The mime appears to have been a combination of ballet and harlequinade. The chief performers, who were dressed in ridiculous costume, carried on an impromptu dialogue in speech and song, full of the coarsest jests, and accompanied by the most lascivious movements. Much of the amusement was supplied by old men with bald crowns, who were knocked about and pelted with missiles. As for the actresses, little else was required from them but beauty and audacity. A large chorus of dancers, male and female, followed the action with appropriate songs and gestures; and the women, with painted cheeks and blackened eyelids, were according to Chrysostom the chief attraction. The pantomime claimed to stand on a higher level. It was performed solely, among the Greeks, by boys and men. The chief actors wore masks and graceful dresses, and represented in dumb show some mythological story, often taken from an ancient tragedy, like the Ion of Euripides. A chorus of youths danced and sang in accompaniment. But the performance, though artistically superior to the mimes, was no less lascivious and suggestive, as its advocate Libanius himself confesses; and the performers were generally people of the vilest character.

It is often imagined that the extinction of the Greek drama was due to the hostility of the Church. But the supposition is only justified to a very partial extent. The cause which eventually led to the disappearance of the regular drama was the surpassing popularity of these mimes and pantomimes.

[1] This account of the mime and pantomime, as they were performed by the Greeks in the fourth and following centuries, is taken from P. E. Müller's Commentatio de genio moribus et luxu aevi Theodosiani, 1797, p. 92 ff.—a most interesting and exhaustive work, in which full details will be found.

Tragedy and comedy are rarely attacked by Christian writers, especially after the official establishment of Christianity, when they ceased to be associated with the state religion, or to be important from an ecclesiastical point of view[1]. Lactantius is the only father, after the time of Constantine, who speaks of them with severity[2]. Augustine is far more lenient, and distinguishes them favourably from the other kinds of theatrical performance, confessing that 'though their subjects are often disgraceful, their language is not immoral,' and that they form a part of 'what is called a liberal education[3].'

The ballets, on the other hand, are denounced with the utmost sternness, as sources of corruption, by every writer of the Church. It was against the actors and actresses of these ballets, and not against the performers of tragedy and comedy, who had practically disappeared, that the celebrated enactments of Honorius and Arcadius were directed. The severity of these measures was oppressive in the extreme, and must have rendered the lives of the victims almost unbearable. They are never to show their faces in the market-place, or at the churches or public baths. They are forbidden to attend even the theatre as spectators, or to speak with boys and women of the Christian religion. When they walk abroad, no slave may attend them, after the fashion of the times, with a folding-chair. After they have once joined the stage, they must remain there for the rest of their lives[4]. These vindictive measures were no doubt justified by the character of the later actors. Yet in spite of their cruelty, the mimes and pantomimes continued to

[1] P. E. Müller, Commentatio de genio moribus et luxu aevi Theodosiani, 1797, p. 138.

[2] Institut. 6. 20 'tragicae historiae subiciunt oculis parricidia et incesta regum malorum, et cothurnata scelera demonstrant.'

[3] De Civitate Dei, 2. 8 'scenicorum tolerabiliora ludorum, comoediae scilicet et tragoediae, hoc est fabulae poe arum agendae in spectaculis, multa rerum turpitudine, sed nulla saltem, sicut aliae multae, verborum obscenitate compositae; quas etiam inter studia quae liberalia vocantur pueri legere et discere coguntur a senibus.'

[4] Cod. Theod. lib. 15, tit. 7, legg. 1, 2 and 12; ibid. tit. 13, lex 1. These laws are directed against all public performers in the theatre ('omnes qui spectaculo sui populo materiam voluptatis praebuerunt'); but the great majority of such performers, in the time of Honorius and Arcadius, were actors of mimes and pantomimes.

maintain a fitful and precarious existence for many generations afterwards, until at length all theatrical performances throughout the Eastern Empire were finally abolished by the Council of Trullo at the end of the seventh century[1].

[1] P. E. Müller, Commentatio de genio aevi Theodosiani, p. 141. In the Western Empire theatrical exhibitions were never formally interdicted; but the public performance of such spectacles was brought to an end by the Lombard invasions, though they appear to have survived in private houses down to the time of the Renascence (Müller, ibid.).

APPENDIX I

THE TRAGIC POETS OF ANCIENT GREECE.

THE following list of poets coincides in the main with that given by Nauck in Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, pp. 961–963; but about twenty names have been added, mostly from inscriptions recently discovered. In the case of the more obscure dramatists, who have not already been described, a concise summary is inserted of all that is known about their careers. As for the others, the reader is referred in each case to the text of the work.

ACESTOR, twice satirised by Aristophanes on account of his foreign birth (Av. 31, Vesp. 1221). Called Sacas, because of his Thracian origin (Schol. Aristoph. Av. 31). Frequently ridiculed by the other comic poets—by Theopompus and Metagenes, as a Thracian or Mysian; by Callias, as an object of hatred to the choruses; by Cratinus, as a bad dramatist; and by Eupolis, as a parasite (Id. Av. 31, Vesp. 1221. Meineke, Com. Frag. 2, p. 485).

ACHAEUS OF ERETRIA, p. 408.

ACHAEUS OF SYRACUSE, a *τραγικὸς νεώτερος*, who wrote ten tragedies (Suidas s. v.).

AEANTIDES, placed in the Pleiad by Choeroboscus (in Schol. Hephaest. p. 185 Gaisford), and by Tzetzes p. 143. 5 Westermann).

AEMILIUS, of Hyettus, won the prize for satyric drama at the Thespian *Μουσεῖα* about the first century A.D. (Corp. Ins. Gr. 1585).

AESCHYLUS, p. 46.

AESCHYLUS OF ALEXANDRIA, date uncertain. Athenaeus quotes two lines from his Amphitryon, and also mentions an epic poem by him called *Μεσσηνιακά* (Athen. p. 599). Zenobius (5. 85) mentions a work of his *περὶ παροιμιῶν*.

AGATHON, p. 409.

[ALCAEUS], described by Suidas (s.v.) as an Athenian tragic poet *ὃν τινες θέλουσι πρῶτον τραγικὸν γεγονέναι*—a statement which has probably arisen from a confusion with the comic poet Alcaeus, who wrote a *κωμῳδοτραγῳδία* (Meineke, Hist. Crit. p. 247).

ALCIMENES, a tragic poet of Megara, date uncertain (Suidas s. v.).

ALEXANDER AETOLUS, p. 441.

ALEXANDER OF TANAGRA, son of Glaucus, and satyric poet, not later than the first century B.C. (Bull. de Corr. Hell. 2, p. 590, where he is mentioned as victor in some unknown contest).

AMINIAS, son of Democles, and satyric

poet of Thebes; victor at the Orchomenian Χαριτήσια about 200 B.C. (Corp. Ins. Graec. 1584).

ABAXIOS, son of Thrasycleides, and satyric poet of Mytilene; date uncertain; victorious in some unknown contest with a satyric play called Πίρωνα (Le Bas, Asie Mineure, 91—inscription from Teos).

ANTIPHANES, of Carystus, tragic poet and contemporary of Thespis (Suidas s.v.).

ANTIPHON, a tragic poet of the fourth century, who lived at Syracuse, and wrote tragedies both on his own account, and also in conjunction with Dionysius the tyrant (Athen. p. 673. Plut. X Orat. p. 833 B). He was said to have been put to death by Dionysius, either on account of his remark that the best bronze was that from which the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were made (cp. Diog. Laert. 6. 50, and Tzetzes, Chil. 5. 140, where the same story is told about Diogenes and about Plato), or because he ridiculed the tyrant's tragedies (Plut. l.c., Philostrat. vit. Soph. 1. 15. 3, both of whom confuse Antiphon the poet with Antiphon the orator, who died six years before the commencement of Dionysius' reign). On his coolness when being led to execution see the story in Aristot. Rhet. 2. 6 (his fellow-sufferers were covering their faces with their cloaks, and he asked them whether they were afraid of being recognised next day by the bystanders). His plays are quoted four times by Aristotle, and once by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 792, where the fragments will be found).

APHAREUS, an Athenian orator and tragic poet, son of the sophist Hippias and of Plathane, and stepson of Isocrates (Suidas s.v.). In the course of his dramatic career, which lasted from 368 to 341 B.C., he wrote about thirty-seven tragedies (two of them doubtful), and exhibited twice at the Lenaea, and six times at the City Dionysia, where he obtained two victories (Plut. X Orat. p. 839 C. Cp. Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 977 b, where he is said to have been twice victorious). His dramas were exhibited by deputy, those at the City Dionysia being brought out in the name of a certain Dionysius (Plut. l.c.).

APOLLODORUS, of Tarsus, tragic poet, date uncertain (Suidas s.v., who mentions the names of six of his plays).

APOLLONIDES, twice quoted by Stobaeus, otherwise unknown. For the fragments see Nauck, p. 825.

[APOLLONIUS RHODIUS], p. 442, note 3.

ARADUS, son of Timon, an Athenian satyric poet, victorious in the satyric contest at the Thespian Μουσεῖα towards the end of the third century B.C. (Archiv. des missions scientif. et litt., 4. p. 522).

[ARATUS], p. 442, note 3.

[ARION], p. 22, note 1.

ARISTARCHUS, p. 418.

ARISTIAS, p. 412.

ARISTON, p. 414.

ARTAVASDES, king of Armenia in the time of Crassus, and author of several Greek tragedies (Plut. Crassus, c. 33). On the celebrated performance of the Bacchae at his court, when the head of Crassus was brought in, see p. 439.

ARTEMON, son of Artemon, and Athenian tragic poet, victor in tragedy at the Thespian Μουσεῖα about the first century A.D. (Corp. Ins. Gr. 1585).

ASCLEPIADES, son of Iœsius, Theban tragic poet, victor in an unknown contest some time before the first century B.C. (Bull. de Corr. Hell. 2. p. 590—inscription in the Museum at Tanagra). One of the authors whose works are included in the list of books found at the Peiraeus (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 992—probably a library catalogue, and apparently belonging to the first century B.C.).

ASTYDAMAS (1), p. 429.

ASTYDAMAS (2), p. 429.

[AULEAS], mentioned as a tragic poet by Iohannes Malalas, a Byzantine historian of the time of Justinian (p. 142, ed. Dindorf)—*ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις δὲ τοῖς μετὰ τὴν ἅλωσιν Τροίας παρ' Ἕλλησιν ἐθαυμάζετο πρῶτος Θέμις ὀνόματι· ἐξῆυρε γὰρ οὗτος τραγῳδίας μελῳδίας, καὶ ἐξέθετο πρῶτος δράματα. καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο Μίνως, καὶ μετὰ Μίνωα Αὐλέας τραγικοὺς χορὸν δραμάτων συνεγράψατο. καὶ λοιπὸν τὸν μετὰ ταῦτα χρόνον ἐξ αὐτῶν Εὐριπίδης εὑρὼν πολλὰς ἱστορίας δραμάτων συνεγράψατο.* Cp. id., p. 61; Anecd. Par. 2, p. 227.

BION, p. 413.

BION OF TARSUS, date unknown, mentioned as a tragic poet by Diog. Laert. 4. 58.

BIOTUS, two lines from his Medea quoted by Stobaeus, otherwise unknown (Nauck, p. 825).

CALLIMACHUS, the famous Alexandrian poet and grammarian. Suidas (s. v.), in the list of his works, includes tragedies, comedies, and satyric dramas, about which, however, nothing is known.

CALLIPPUS, son of Callon, satyric poet of Thebes; won the prize for satyric drama at the *Ἀμφιαράϊα* at Oropus in the first century B.C. (Ephem. Archaeol. 1884, p. 126).

CALLISTRATUS, second in the tragic contest at the Lenaea in 418 B.C. with the Amphilochus, Ixion, and another play (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 972).

CARCINUS (1), p. 415.

CARCINUS (2), p. 431.

CARCINUS (3), mentioned only by Suidas (s. v.), by whom he is called *Ἀκραγαντῖνος τραγικός*.

CHAEREMON, p. 426.

CHARES, three times quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 826), but otherwise unknown. The only reason for supposing him to have been a tragic poet is the fact that the passages quoted by Stobaeus are in the tragic style and metre.

CHOERILUS, p. 39.

CLEAENETUS, an Athenian tragic poet of the fourth century B.C.; twice quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 807); mentioned by Aeschines (in Timarch. § 98) as *ὁ χοροδιδάσκαλος*, and by Alexis (Meineke, 3, p. 507) as *ὁ τραγικός*.

[CLEOMACHUS], supposed to have been a tragic poet because of a false reading in a quotation from Cratinus (Athen. p. 638 D), where, however, *τῷ Κλεομάχῳ* should be altered to *τῷ Κλεομάχου*, the reference being to Gnesippus, the son of Cleomachus, as is proved by the context (see Meineke, 2, p. 27).

CLEOPHON, an Athenian tragic poet according to Suidas (s. v.), who mentions the names of ten of his plays; but as he also (v. *Ἰοφῶν*) includes six of these among the dramas of Iophon, it is clear that he has confused the two poets. That the six plays were really the work of Iophon appears to be proved by the fact that one of them is quoted under his name by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 761). Whether the remaining four should be ascribed to Cleophon is uncertain. As to the date of Cleophon little is known. Aristotle mentions him on four occasions. In Rhet. 3. 7. 2 he censures him for appending ornamental epithets to humble words, as if one should speak of a *πότνια συκῆ*. In Poet. 2 he remarks that he represented men as they are (*ὅμοιοι*), without any idealisation. In Poet. 22 he classes him with Sthenelus as a representative of the common-place style of tragic diction. In Sophist. El. 15. 5 he refers to a poem of his called Mandrobulus.

CLITUS, son of Callisthenes, tragic poet of uncertain date; mentioned as having been crowned by the people

in an inscription found at Teos (Corp. Ins. Gr. 3105).

CRATES, p. 429.

CRITIAS, p. 416.

DATIS, a tragic poet, and son of the elder Carcinus, according to Schol. Aristoph. Pax 289. In Schol. Ran. 86 he is merely described as one of the sons of Carcinus, without any reference to his profession. See p. 415, note 4.

DEMETRIUS, a satyric poet of Tarsus, according to Diog. Laert. 5. 85.

DEMONAX. Two tragic lines are quoted from a certain Demonax by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 827). Some critics doubt whether there was ever a tragic poet of this name, and suppose the lines to have been taken from the works of the cynic philosopher Demonax, who flourished in the second century A. D. See Nauck, p. 826.

DICAEOGENES, a writer of tragedies and dithyrambs (Harpocrat. s. v.). The first line of the Ecclesiazusae (produced in 391 B. C.) was supposed to have been taken either from him or from Agathon (Schol. Aristoph. Eccles. 1). Aristotle (Poet. 16) refers to the recognition-scene in his Κύπριοι, where a man on seeing a picture burst into tears, and was thereupon discovered. For his fragments see Nauck, pp. 775, 776.

DIOGENES OF ATHENS, a tragic poet who flourished about the time of the overthrow of the Thirty (404 B. C.), and whose turgid style was satirised by Melanthius, a contemporary dramatist (Plut., Rect. Rat. Aud. c. 7). A rather bombastic passage from his Semele is quoted by Athenaeus (Nauck, p. 776). Suidas has the following notice about him—Διογένης ἢ Οἰνόμαος Ἀθηναῖος τραγικὸς γέγονεν ἐπὶ τῆς τῶν λ' καταλύσεως· δράματα αὐτοῦ Ἀχιλλεύς, Ἑλένη, Ἡρακλῆς, Θυέστης, Μήδεια, Οἰδίπους, Χρύσιππος, Σεμέλη. This account contains a double error, and offers an instructive example of the kind of confusion to which Suidas was liable. (1) Diogenes the Athenian is confused with Diogenes of Sinope, the Cynic philosopher (412–323 B. C.); and of the eight plays which Suidas mentions the first seven are identical with those ascribed to the Cynic Diogenes by Diog. Laert. 6. 80. (2) Oenomaus of Gadara, another Cynic philosopher who wrote tragedies, is unaccountably dragged in to supply an alternative name to Diogenes the Athenian.

DIOGENES OF SINOPE, the Cynic philosopher. See the previous notice, and also p. 428.

DIOGENES OF THEBES, son of Theodotus, and tragic poet; won the prize for tragedy at the Σωτήρια at Acraephiae in the first century B. C. (Keil, Inscrip. Boeot. p. 60).

DIOGNETUS, a tragic poet of Ptolemais in Egypt; flourished in the third century B. C.; mentioned as a member of the guild of actors at Ptolemais during that period (Bull. de Corr. Hell. 9, p. 133).

DIONYSIADES, son of Phylarchides, and a native of Mallus in Cilicia (Suidas s. v.). Included in the Pleiad by some authors (Suidas, l. c.; Strabo, 14, p. 675; Schol. Hephaest. pp. 53 and 185 Gaisford). He wrote a work called Χαρακτῆρες ἢ Φιλοκώμῳδοι, containing an account of the various Greek poets. See also p. 442, note 3.

DIONYSIUS THE RENEGADE, p. 428.

DIONYSIUS THE TYRANT, p. 432.

DORILLUS, an Athenian tragic poet of the fifth century, contemptuously referred to in one of the fragments of Aristophanes (Meineke, 2, p. 1101), otherwise unknown.

DYMAS, p. 446.

EMPEDOCLES, the Sicilian poet and philosopher, who flourished about 450 B. C. He was said by Aristotle to have written tragedies, though Heracleides the son of Serapion

(a historian of about 210 B.C.) ascribed them to a different person (Diog. Laert. 8. 58). But Hieronymus of Rhodes (about 300 B.C.) professed to have met with forty-three tragedies by Empedocles; and Neanthes (a historian of the third century B.C.) said they were composed by him in his youth, and that he had seen them himself (Diog. Laert. l. c.). According to Suidas (s. v.) the tragic poet Empedocles was the grandson of the philosopher, and the number of his tragedies was twenty-four.

[EPIGENES], p. 22.

EUANDRIDAS, son of Hestiaeus, and tragic poet of Miletus, known only from the inscription on his tomb, which states that he lived a pious life, and died at the age of eighty (Revue d'Archéol. 1874, p. 113).

EUARETUS, Athenian tragic poet of the fourth century B.C.; second in the tragic contest at the City Dionysia in 341 with the Τεῦκρος, Ἀχιλλεύς, and another play; third in 340 with two plays of which the names are lost (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 973).

EUETES, Athenian tragic poet of the fifth century B.C.; known only from the list of victors at the City Dionysia, where his name occurs between that of Aeschylus and Polyphradmon, and he is credited with one victory (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 977 [Εὐ]έτης I).

EUPHANTUS, p. 446.

EUPHORION, p. 413.

EUPHRONIUS, mentioned as a possible member of the Pleiad by Choeroboscus (in Schol. Hephaest., p. 185 Gaisford), from whom we also learn that he was a grammarian at Alexandria, that he wrote Πριάπεια, and that Aristarchus the grammarian was his pupil. See also p. 442, note 3.

EURIPIDES (1), p. 204.

EURIPIDES (2), p. 414.

EURIPIDES (3), mentioned only by Suidas, who describes him as follows —Εὐριπίδης, Ἀθηναῖος τραγικός, πρεσβύτερος τοῦ ἐνδόξου γενομένου· ἐδίδαξε δράματα ιβ', εἶλε δὲ νίκας β'.

GAIUS IULIUS, p. 446.

GLAUCON, son of Glaucon, tragic poet of Ephesus; won the prize for tragedy at the Magnesian Ῥωμαῖα in the first century B.C. (Mittheil. des deutsch. archaeol. Instit., Athen. Abtheil., vol. xix. 1894, p. 96).

GNESIPPUS, son of Cleomachus, Athenian tragic poet of the fifth century B.C. Satirised (Athen., p. 638. Meineke, 2, p. 27) by Chionides, Telecleides, Cratinus, and the author of the Εἵλωται, on account of the effeminate and licentious character of his poetry. Cp. Cratinus, Ὧραι, frag. 2 ἴτω δὲ καὶ τραγῳδίας | ὁ Κλεομάχου διδάσκαλος, παρατιλτριῶν | ἔχων χορὸν Λυδιστὶ τιλλουσῶν μέλη | πονηρά. Cratinus also complains that he once received a chorus in preference to Sophocles (Βουκόλοι, frag. 2 ὃς οὐκ ἔδωκ' αἰτοῦντι Σοφοκλέει χορόν, | τῷ Κλεομάχου δ', ὃν οὐκ ἂν ἡξίουν ἐγὼ | ἐμοὶ διδάσκειν, οὐδ' ἂν εἰς Ἀδώνια). Athenaeus (l. c.) describes him as παιγνιαγράφος τῆς ἱλαρᾶς μούσης. But as the fragments from Cratinus show clearly that he was a tragic poet, this description should probably be regarded as a reference to the erotic character of some of his tragic odes. See Meineke, l. c.; Welcker, Griech. Trag. 3, p. 1024 foll.

GORGIPPUS, son of Pythippus, satyric poet of Chalcis; won the prize for satyric drama at the Σωτήρια at Acraephiae in the first century B.C. (Keil, Inscrip. Boeot. p. 60).

HARMODIUS, son of Asclepiades, satyric poet of Tarsus; was victorious at the Magnesian Ῥωμαῖα in the first century B.C. with the satyric play Protesilaus (Mittheil. des archaeol. Instit. in Athen, vol. xix. 1894, p. 96).

HELIODORUS, an Athenian tragic poet,

mentioned by Galen (vol. xiv. p. 145), but otherwise unknown.

HERACLEIDES OF ATHENS, son of Heracleides, and satyric poet; victor in the satyric contest at the Oropian Ἀμφιαράϊα in the first century B. C. (Rangabé, Antiq. Hellén. vol. ii. no. 965).

HERACLEIDES OF PONTUS, p. 428.

HERMOCRATES, son of Alexander, and tragic poet of Miletus; victor in tragedy at the Oropian Ἀμφιαράϊα in the first century B. C. (Rangabé, l. c.).

HIERONYMUS, a person twice satirised by Aristophanes on account of his shaggy hair (Acharn. 389, Nub. 348). He is described by the scholiast as a man of licentious habits, who won some fame as a lyric and tragic writer, but whose poetry was unequal and ill-constructed, the subjects and characters being of a horrible kind (Schol. Aristoph. l. c.; Suidas v. Ἅιδος κυνῆ).

HIPPOTHOON, a poet from whom six passages are quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 827), all of a gnomic character, and written in iambic verse. Probably a tragic dramatist, though nothing is known about him.

HOMER. p. 441.

ION, p. 406.

IOPHON, p. 414.

ISAGORAS, mentioned only by Philostratus (Vit. Soph., 2. 11. 1), who describes him as a tragic poet, and pupil of Chrestus of Byzantium, who taught rhetoric at Athens in the second century A. D.

ISIDORUS, twice quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 829), but otherwise unknown; apparently a tragic poet.

LYCOPHRON, p. 441.

LYSIMACHUS, mentioned as a tragic poet in an inscription of about 150 B. C.—a decree of the corporation of actors belonging to Ionia and the Hellespont (Le Bas, Asie Mineure, No. 281).

LYSISTRATUS, son of Mnaseas, and tragic poet of Chalcis; victor in tragedy at the Oropian Ἀμφιαράϊα in the first century B. C. (Ephem. Archaeol. 1884, p. 126).

MAMERCUS, tyrant of Catana about 350 B. C.; wrote tragedies according to Plutarch (Timoleon, c. 31).

MELANTHIUS, a tragic poet of the fifth century B. C., who also wrote elegies (Athen., p. 343). Apparently an actor as well as a poet (Aristoph. Pax 804 Μελάνθιος οὗ δὴ | πικροτάτην ὅπα γηρύσαντος ἥκουσ', | ἡνίκα τῶν τραγῳδῶν | τὸν χορὸν εἶχον ἀδελφός τε καὶ αὐτός κ.τ.λ.). Satirised by Aristophanes on account of his leprosy (Av. 152), and his gluttony (Pax 809 ἄμφω Γοργόνες ἀψοφάγοι βατιδοσκόποι κ.τ.λ. Ibid. 1009, where, on arriving late at market, and finding the fish all gone, he laments his fate in a tragic monody). Also frequently ridiculed by the other comic poets—by Leucon, Pherecrates, and Archippus for his gluttony (Athen., p. 343); by Eupolis, for immorality and subserviency (Schol. Aristoph. Pax 803); and by Plato and Callias for his leprosy and loquacity (Schol. Av. 152). His witticisms are often quoted by later writers, e. g. Plut., Rect. Rat. Aud. c. 7 (when asked his opinion of Diogenes' tragedies, he replied that he was unable to see them on account of the mass of words with which they were covered up); Id. Symp. 2. 1. 9 (concerning the demagogue Archippus, who was hump-backed, he remarked οὐ προεστάναι τῆς πόλεως ἀλλὰ προκεκυφέναι). Cp. also Id. Conj. Praecept. c. 43; Aud. Poet. c. 4; Symp. 2. 1. 4; Athen. p. 6. Only one line of his poetry has been preserved (Nauck, p. 760). As to the Medea from which he sings the monody in Pax 1009, it is uncertain whether one of his own plays is meant, or the tragedy of Euripides.

MELETUS, p. 417.

MELITON, only known from the allusion in Anthol. Pal. 11. 246 (by Lucillus, a poet of Nero's time), where he is said to have written a δρᾶμα σαπρόν called Νιόβη.

MENECRATES, won the prize for tragedy at the City Dionysia in 422 B.C. (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 971 b [Με]νεκράτης ἐδί[δασκεν]).

[MESATUS], mentioned as a tragic poet by the author of the Epistolae Euripideae, 5. 2 Ἀγάθων καὶ Μέσατος. The name, however, is obviously due to a misunderstanding of Aristoph. Vesp. 1501 (ΦΙ. τίς ὁ κακοδαίμων ἐστίν; ΞΑ. υἱὸς Καρκίνου | ὁ μέσατος), where the schol. remarks οὐ τὸν τραγικὸν λέγει Μέσατον. See Meineke, Hist. Crit. p. 513.

MIMNERMUS, twice quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 829), one of the passages being from his Neoptolemus; otherwise unknown.

[MINOS], mentioned as a tragic poet by Iohannes Malalas. See under Auleas.

MORSIMUS, p. 414.

MORYCHUS, a tragic poet of the fifth century B.C., often satirised by Aristophanes for his gluttony and sensuality (Achar. 887, Vesp. 506, 1142, Pax 1008). Also ridiculed by Plato, the comic poet, for the same reason (Suidas v. Φασιανοί).

MOSCHION, a tragic poet who is often quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, pp. 812–816), but about whom nothing further is known. He apparently belonged to the fourth century B.C.; and may possibly be the same as the glutton and parasite frequently ridiculed in the Middle Comedy (Meineke, Hist. Crit. p. 417). On his style see p. 424.

NEARCHUS, a tragic poet and friend of Callisthenes the philosopher, according to Suidas (v. Καλλισθένης); who adds that the two friends accompanied Alexander the Great to Asia, where they were put to death by him for conspiracy. As Suidas, however, tells the same story about Neophron, the contemporary of Euripides, there must evidently have been some confusion; and the existence of Nearchus is in consequence rather doubtful. See p. 418, note 5.

NEOPHRON, p. 418.

[NICANDER], the author of the Θηριακά and the Ἀλεξιφάρμακα; erroneously included in the Pleiad by Tzetzes. See p. 442, note 3.

NICOLAUS DAMASCENUS, p. 447.

NICOMACHUS, a tragic poet of Alexandria in the Troad (Suidas s. v.). Suidas says he wrote eleven tragedies, and then proceeds to enumerate the titles of fourteen, among them being the Ἐλλείθυια, Τριλογία, and Μετεκβαίνουσαι. Hence it is clear (as Meineke, Hist. Crit. p. 496, points out) that the tragic Nicomachus has been confused with the comic poet of the same name, whose Ἐλλείθυια is well known. If this play, together with the Τριλογία and Μετεκβαίνουσαι, are excluded from the list as comedies, there remain eleven tragedies—the number given by Suidas. A second Nicomachus, an Athenian tragic poet, is also mentioned by Suidas, who adds that he unexpectedly defeated Euripides and Theognis, and that he wrote an Oedipus. But as an Oedipus also occurs among the plays of the first Nicomachus, the two should probably be regarded as the same person; and we may conclude that he was born at Alexandria, but subsequently migrated to Athens.

NOTHIPPUS, a tragic poet, ridiculed by Hermippus (one of the writers of the Old Comedy) for his gluttony (Athen. p. 344). In the list of victors at the City Dionysia his name apparently occurs immediately before that of Sophocles (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 977 a [Νόθ]ιππος I). If the restoration is correct, he must have been a contemporary of Sophocles, and

have won one victory at the City Dionysia.

OENOMAUS, of Gadara, a Cynic philosopher of the time of Hadrian. Said by Julian (Orat. 7, p. 210) to have written tragedies.

PAMMENES, mentioned in Philostrat. Vit. Soph. 2. 1. 7 as a tragic poet of the second century A.D., who exhibited at the Pythian Games, and was highly celebrated.

[PAMPHILUS]. In Aristoph. Plut. 382 Chremes with his wife and children, kneeling in supplication, are compared to the 'Heracleidae of Pamphilus.' Some grammarians (Schol. ad loc.) explained this reference by supposing that there was a tragic poet Pamphilus who wrote a Heracleidae. But as his name was not to be found in the Didascaliae, their conjecture is no doubt erroneous.

PASIPHON, p. 428, note 5.

PATROCLES, of Thurii; mentioned as a tragic poet by Clemens Alexandrinus, and once quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 830); otherwise unknown.

PAUSANIAS, the friend of Agathon (see Plat. Symp. p. 176 A), whom he accompanied to the court of Archelaus in Macedonia, is described in Anecd. Oxon. 4, p. 269 as a τραγικός, probably by some confusion, since Plato makes no mention of his tragic poetry.

PHAENIPPUS, a tragic poet who was attached to the company of actors at Ptolemais in Egypt during the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.); see Bull. de Corr. Hell. 9, p. 133.

PHANOSTRATUS, son of Heracleides, and a native of Halicarnassus; won the prize for tragedy at Athens in 332 B.C. (Bull. de Corr. Hell. 2, p. 392). A statue of him was erected, apparently at Athens, by the people of Halicarnassus (Ἀθήναιον, 6, p. 368).

PHILISCUS OF AEGINA, p. 428, note 5.

PHILISCUS OF CORCYRA, p. 441.

PHILOCLES (1), p. 413.

PHILOCLES (2), a tragic poet, son of the elder Astydamas, and great-grandson of the elder Philocles (Schol. Aristoph. Av. 282; Suidas v. Φιλοκλῆς).

PHILOSTRATUS, p. 447.

PHILOXENIDES, of Oropus, son of Philippus, and satyric poet; won the prize for satyric drama at the Oropian Ἀμφιαράϊα in the first century B.C. (Ephem. Archaeol. 1884, p. 124).

[PHOCYLIDES], the epic and elegiac poet of Miletus, who flourished about 530 B.C. Erroneously called a 'tragic poet' by Cyrill. contr. Iul. 1, p. 13 A.

PHRYNICHUS (1), son of Polyphradmon, p. 42.

PHRYNICHUS (2), son of Melanthas, p. 42, note 1.

[PINDAR], p. 24.

PLATO. According to the story in Aelian (Var. Hist. 2. 30) Plato, in his youth, composed a tragic tetralogy, which he entrusted to the actors for exhibition; but shortly afterwards, happening to hear the conversation of Socrates, he was so impressed by the magic of his words, that he abandoned poetry for philosophy.

POLEMAEUS of Ephesus, son of Diodorus, and tragic poet; won two victories at the Magnesian Ῥωμαῖα in the first century B.C.—one in tragedy with his Clytaemnestra, and one in satyric drama with his Ajax (Mittheil. des archaeol. Instit. in Athen, 1894, vol. xix. p. 96).

POLEMON, son of Neon; won the prize for satyric drama at the Magnesian Ῥωμαῖα in the first century B.C. (ibid.).

POLYIDUS, called 'the sophist' by Aristotle, who twice refers (Poet. cc. 16 and 17) to the recognition scene in his Iphigeneia, where Orestes, when about to be slain, makes the reflexion that he too is going to be

sacrificed, like his sister; whence the discovery of his identity. Nothing further is known about this Polyidus. The celebrated dithyrambic poet and musician of the same name, who flourished at the end of the fifth century (Diod. Sic. 14. 46; Plut. Mus. c. 21; Corp. Ins. Graec. 3053), must have been a different person, since he would hardly have been described as 'the sophist' by Aristotle.

POLYPHRADMON, p. 412.

POMPEIUS MACER, author of a passage quoted by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 831), apparently from a Medea. He was probably the Pompeius Macer to whom Augustus entrusted the superintendence of the Library at Rome (Suet., Iul. Caes. c. 56).

PRATINAS, p. 40.

PROTARCHUS, son of Antimenes, and tragic poet of Thebes; won the prize for tragedy at the Oropian *Ἀμφιαράϊα* in the first century B.C. (Ephem. Archaeol. 1884, p. 124).

PTOLEMAEUS PHILOPATOR, p. 443.

PYTHANGELUS, mentioned by name in Aristoph. Ran. 87, where the scholiast remarks that he was a bad and obscure tragic poet.

PYTHON, of Catana or Byzantium, author of a satyric play called *Ἀγήν* (the meaning of the title is unknown), which was acted on the banks of the Hydaspes during Alexander's campaigns, and which some scholars ascribed to Alexander himself. It appears to have been produced about 324 B.C., when Harpalus had revolted from Alexander, and fled to Athens with Glycera, and was trying to bribe the Athenians—all which events were alluded to in the course of the play (Nauck, p. 810). See p. 395.

SCOPELIANUS, p. 447.

SERAPION, an author from whom Stobaeus quotes two iambic lines, apparently part of a tragedy (Nauck, p. 831). Nothing else is known about him.

SILENUS, a tragic poet whose name, together with part of the title of one of his plays, occurs in the catalogue of books found at the Peiraeus (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 992—the date of the inscription is probably the first century B.C.).

[SIMONIDES], p. 24.

SOPHOCLES (1), p. 126.

SOPHOCLES (2), p. 429.

SOPHOCLES (3), p. 445.

SOSIPHANES, son of Sosicles, native of Syracuse, and tragic poet, who exhibited seventy-three plays, and won seven victories (Suidas s. v.). According to Suidas (l. c.) and Choeroboscus (in Schol. Hephaest. p. 185, Gaisford) he was a member of the Pleiad. As to his date, Suidas has the following statement—*ἐγένετο δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν τελευταίων χρόνων Φιλίππου, οἱ δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνος* (i.e. about 336 or 323 B.C.). *τελευτῇ δὲ ρια' ὀλυμπιάδι, οἱ δὲ ριδ'* (i.e. 336 or 324 B.C.). *οἱ δὲ ἀκμάσαι αὐτὸν γράφουσι.* Clinton alters the last two numbers to *ρκα'* and *ρκδ'* (296 and 284), and supposes that they denote, in accordance with the alternative suggestion in Suidas, the date at which Sosiphanes *flourished*. But even then he would seem to have been anterior to the Pleiad (see p. 441). For his fragments see Nauck, p. 819.

SOSITHEUS, p. 442.

SPINTHARUS, of Heracleia in Bithynia, hence called contemptuously a 'Phrygian' by Aristophanes (Av. 761). A tragic poet of the end of the fifth century B.C. (Suidas s. v., who mentions the names of two of his plays). Some said it was he, and not Dionysius the Renegade, who attempted to palm off the spurious Sophoclean tragedy upon Heracleides Ponticus (see p. 428).

STHENELUS, p. 418.

[THEOCRITUS], p. 442, note 3.

THEODECTES, p. 424.

THEODORUS, son of Dionysius, and tragic poet; three times victorious at the Magnesian Ῥωμαῖα in the first century B.C.—once in tragedy, with the Hermione; and twice in satyric drama, with the Thytes and Palamedes (Mittheil. des archaeol. Institut. in Athen, 1894, vol. xix. p. 96). Possibly this Theodorus may be the same as the tragic poet mentioned by Diog. Laert. 2. 104. In Ael., Var. Hist. 14. 40 the Theodorus referred to, though called a 'tragic poet,' is obviously the great tragic actor of the fourth century B.C.

THEOGNIS, an Athenian tragic poet of the fifth century B.C., chiefly known from the ridicule of Aristophanes. In Acharn. 9 he is called upon in place of Aeschylus, to the great disappointment of Dicaeopolis. In Acharn. 138 his tragedies are said to have frozen the very rivers of Thrace by their frigidity. In Thesm. 168 the connexion between a poet's character and his verses is illustrated by the remark that Θέογνις ψυχρὸς ὢν ψυχρῶς ποιεῖ. He was called Χιών because of the coldness of his style (Suidas s. v.). On one occasion he was beaten, along with Euripides, by a certain Nicomachus (Id. v. Νικόμαχος). All that now remains of his poetry is his metaphorical description of Apollo's bow as φόρμιγξ ἄχορδος (Nauck, p. 769). According to Suidas (s. v.) and Schol. Acharn. 11 he was one of the Thirty; and a Θέογνις occurs in the list of the Thirty given by Xenophon (Hell. 2. 3. 2).

THEOPHILUS, won the prize for tragedy at the City Dionysia in 387 B.C. (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 971 c).

THESPIS, p. 26.

THYMOTELES, Athenian tragic poet, mentioned in an Amphictyonic decree of the second century B.C. as having been sent in an embassy by the Athenian company of actors to the Amphictyonic Council (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 551).

TIMESITHEUS, known only from the notice in Suidas (s. v.), who describes him as a tragic poet, and mentions the names of fourteen of his plays.

TIMOCLES, won the prize for satyric drama at the City Dionysia in 340 B.C. with his Lycurgus (Corp. Ins. Att. 2. 973). Mentioned as a tragic poet by Athen. p. 407.

TIMON, p. 447.

XENOCLES (1), p. 415.

XENOCLES (2), p. 432.

XENOCRATES, Athenian tragic poet of the third century B.C. (Corp. Ins. Att. 1351).

[XENOPHANES], the famous elegiac poet of the sixth century B.C., erroneously described as a 'tragic dramatist' by Cyrill. contr. Iul. 1, p. 13 A; Syncell. 1, p. 452 (Dindf.); Euseb. Chron. 2, p. 98.

ZENODOTUS, two iambic lines in the tragic style quoted from him by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 831); otherwise unknown.

ZOPYRUS, two tragic lines quoted from him by Stobaeus (Nauck, p. 832); otherwise unknown.

APPENDIX II

TITLES OF GREEK TRAGEDIES AND SATYRIC DRAMAS.

THE following list of titles has been taken mainly from Nauck's Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, pp. 963-968. A few names have been added from Mittheil. des archaeol. Instituts in Athen, 1894, pp. 96 and 97. The classification of the plays in accordance with their supposed contents is in many cases somewhat conjectural, owing to the scanty nature of the fragments. For detailed information the reader is referred to Nauck's collection, where references will be found to the modern authorities on the subject.

I. AESCHYLUS.

The Epic Cycle.

Trojan Cycle.

Cypria. Ἰφιγένεια, Μυσοί, Παλαμήδης, Τήλεφος.

Iliad. Ἕκτορος Λύτρα ἢ Φρύγες, Εὐρώπη ἢ Κᾶρες, Μυρμιδόνες, Νηρεΐδες.

Aethiopis. Θρῇσσαι, Μέμνων, Ὅπλων Κρίσις, Σαλαμίνιαι, Ψυχοστασία.

Little Iliad. Λήμνιοι, Φιλοκτήτης.

Nosti. Ἀγαμέμνων, Εὐμενίδες, Πρωτεὺς σατυρικός, Χοηφόροι.

Odyssey. Κίρκη σατυρική, Ὀστολόγοι, Πηνελόπη.

Telegoneia. Ψυχαγωγοί.

Theban Cycle.

Oedipodeia. Λάιος, Οἰδίπους, Σφὶγξ σατυρική.

Thebais. Ἀργεῖοι, Ἐλευσίνιοι, Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας.

Epigoni. Ἐπίγονοι.

Other Epics.

Danais. Αἰγύπτιοι, Δαναΐδες, Ἱκέτιδες.

Titanomachia. Προμηθεὺς δεσμώτης, Προμηθεὺς λυόμενος, Προμηθεὺς πυρκαεὺς σατυρικός, Προμηθεὺς πυρφόρος.

Outside the Epic Cycle.

Dionysiac.

Βάκχαι, Βασσαρίδες, Διονύσου τροφοί, Ἠδωνοί, Λυκοῦργος σατυρικός, Νεανίσκοι, Σάντριαι, Πενθεύς, Σεμέλη ἢ Ὑδροφόροι.

Argonautic.

Ἀθάμας, Ἀργὼ ἢ κωπαστής, Κάβειροι, Ὑψιπύλη, Φινεύς.

Argive.

Ἀμυμώνη σατυρική, Πολυδέκτης, Φορκίδες.

Heraclean.

Ἀλκμήνη.

Attic.

Ἡρακλείδαι.

Historical.

Πέρσαι.

Miscellaneous.

Αἰτναῖαι, Ἀταλάντη, Γλαῦκος Πόντιος, Γλαῦκος Ποτνιεύς, Ἡλιάδες, Ἰξίων, Καλλιστώ, Κερκυὼν σατυρικός, Νεμέα, Νιόβη, Περραιβίδες, Σίσυφος δραπέτης σατυρικός, Σίσυφος πετροκυλιστής, Τοξότιδες, Ὠρείθυια.

Uncertain.

Δικτυουλκοί, Θαλαμοποιοί, Θεωροὶ ἢ Ἰσθμιασταί, Ἱέρειαι, Κήρυκες σάτυροι, Κρῆσσαι, Λέων σατυρικός, Προπομποί, Φρύγιοι.

2. SOPHOCLES.

The Epic Cycle.

Trojan Cycle.

Cypria. Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἀχαιῶν Σύλλογος ἢ Σύνδειπνοι σάτυροι, Ἀχιλλέως Ἐρασταὶ σάτυροι, Ἑλένης Ἀπαίτησις, Ἑλένης Γάμος σατυρικός, Ἰφιγένεια, Κρίσις σατυρική, Μυσοί, Ναύπλιος καταπλέων, Ὀδυσσεὺς μαινόμενος, Παλαμήδης, Ποιμένες, Σκύριοι, Τήλεφος σατυρικός, Τρῴλος.

Iliad. Φρύγες.

Aethiopis. Αἰθίοπες = Μέμνων.

Little Iliad. Αἴας μαστιγοφόρος, Δόλοπες, Λύκαιναι, Φιλοκτήτης, Φιλοκτήτης ἐν Τροίᾳ, Φοῖνιξ α', Φοῖνιξ β'.

Iliupersis. Αἴας Λοκρός, Αἰχμαλωτίδες, Ἀντηνορίδαι, Λαοκόων, Ἑσπερίδες, Πολυξένη, Πρίαμος, Σίνων.

Nosti. [Αἴγισθος], Ἀλήτης, [Ἀνδρομάχη], Ἑρμιόνη, Εὐρυσάκης, Ἠλέκτρα, Ἠριγόνη, Κλυταιμήστρα, Ναύπλιος πυρκαεύς, Πηλεύς, Τεῦκρος, [Τυνδάρεως], Φθιώτιδες, Χρύσης.

Odyssey. Ναυσικάα = Πλύντριαι, Φαίακες.
Telegoneia. Εὐρύαλος, Νίπτρα ἢ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀκανθοπλὴξ ἢ τραυματίας.

Theban Cycle.

Oedipodeia. Οἰδίπους τύραννος, Οἰδίπους ἐπὶ Κολωνῷ.
Thebais. Ἀμφιάρεως σατυρικός, Ἀντιγόνη.
Epigoni. Ἀλκμέων, Ἐπίγονοι = Ἐριφύλη, [Οἰνεύς].

Other Epics.

Oechaliae Halosis. Τραχίνιαι.

Outside the Epic Cycle.

Διονυσιακὸς σατυρικός. Dionysiac.

Argonautic.

Ἀθάμας α', Ἀθάμας β', Ἄμυκος σατυρικός, Κολχίδες, Λήμνιαι, Πελίας = Ῥιζοτόμοι, Σκύθαι, Τυρὼ α', Τυρὼ β', Φινεὺς α', Φινεὺς β', Φρῖξος.

Argive.

Ἀκρίσιος, Ἀνδρομέδα, Ἀτρεὺς ἢ Μυκηναῖαι, Δανάη, Θυέστης ἐν Σικυῶνι, Θυέστης δεύτερος, Ἴναχος σατυρικός, Λαρισαῖοι, Οἰνόμαος = Ἱπποδάμεια.

Heraclean.

Ἀμφιτρύων, Ἡρακλῆς ἐν Ταινάρῳ ἢ Ἡρακλεῖσκος σατυρικός.

Attic.

Αἰγεύς, Θησεύς, Ἴων, Κρέουσα, Πρόκρις, Τηρεύς, Τριπτόλεμος, Φαίδρα.

Miscellaneous.

Ἀλεάδαι, Δαίδαλος, Θαμύρας, Ἰξίων, Ἰοβάτης, Ἱππόνους, Καμικοί = Μίνως, Κηδαλίων σατυρικός, Κωφοὶ σάτυροι, Μάντεις ἢ Πολύιδος, Μελέαγρος, Μῶμος σατυρικός, Νιόβη, Πανδώρα ἢ Σφυροκόποι σάτυροι, Σαλμωνεὺς σατυρικός, Σίσυφος, Τάνταλος.

Uncertain.

Ἔρις, Εὔμηλος, Ἴβηρες, Ἰοκλῆς, Ἰχνευταὶ σάτυροι, Μοῦσαι, Τυμπανισταί, Ὕβρις σατυρική, Ὑδροφόροι.

3. EURIPIDES.

The Epic Cycle.

Trojan Cycle.

Cypria. Ἀλέξανδρος, Ἰφιγένεια ἐν Αὐλίδι, Παλαμήδης, Πρωτεσίλαος, Σκύριοι, Τήλεφος.

Iliad. Ῥῆσος.
Little Iliad. Φιλοκτήτης.
Iliupersis. Ἑπάβη, Ἐπειός, Τρῳάδες.
Nosti. Ἀνδρομάχη, Ἑλένη, Ἠλέκτρα, Ἰφιγένεια ἐν Ταύροις, Ὀρέστης.
Odyssey. Κύκλωψ σατυρικός.

Theban Cycle.

Oedipodeia. Οἰδίπους, Χρύσιππος.
Thebais. Ἀντιγόνη, Ἱκέτιδες, Ὑψιπύλη, Φοίνισσαι.
Epigoni. Ἀλκμέων ὁ διὰ Κορίνθου, Ἀλκμέων ὁ διὰ Ψωφίδος, Οἰνεύς.

Outside the Epic Cycle.

Βάκχαι.

Dionysiac.

Argonautic.

Ἰνώ, Μήδεια, Πελιάδες, Φρίξος α', Φρίξος β'.

Argive.

Ἀνδρομέδα, Δανάη, Δίκτυς, Θυέστης, Κρῆσσαι, Οἰνόμαος, Πλεισθένης.

Heraclean.

Ἀλκμήνη, Βούσιρις σατυρικός, Εὐρυσθεὺς σατυρικός, Ἡρακλῆς μαινόμενος, Λικύμνιος, Συλεὺς σατυρικός, Τημενίδαι, Τήμενος.

Attic.

Αἰγεύς, Ἀλόπη = Κερκυών, Ἐρεχθεύς, Ἡρακλεῖδαι, Θησεύς, Ἱππόλυτος καλυπτόμενος, Ἱππόλυτος στεφανίας, Ἴων, Πειρίθους, Σκίρων σατυρικός.

Miscellaneous.

Αἴολος, Ἄλκηστις, Ἀντιόπη, Ἀρχέλαος, Αὔγη, Αὐτόλυκος σατυρικός, Βελλεροφόντης, Γλαῦκος = Πολύιδος, Θερισταὶ σάτυροι, Ἰξίων, Κάδμος, Κρεσφόντης, Κρῆτες, [Λάμια], Μελανίππη δεσμῶτις, Μελανίππη σοφή, Μελέαγρος, Πελεύς, Ῥαδάμανθυς, Σθενέβοια, Σίσυφος σατυρικός, Τέννης, Φαέθων, Φοῖνιξ.

4. PRE-AESCHYLEAN POETS.

The Epic Cycle.

Danais.

Αἰγύπτιοι, by Phrynichus (1). Δαναΐδες, by Phrynichus (1).

Outside the Epic Cycle.

Dionysiac.

[Πενθεύς], by Thespis.

Argive.

Ἀνδρομέδα, by Phrynichus (2).

Heraclean.

Ἀνταῖος ἢ Λίβυες, by Phrynichus (1).

Attic.

Ἀλόπη, by Choerilus. Ἡριγόνη, by Phrynichus (2).

Historical.

Μιλήτου Ἅλωσις, by Phrynichus (1). Πέρσαι, by Phrynichus (1). Φοίνισσαι, by Phrynichus (1).

Miscellaneous.

[Ἆθλα Πελίου ἢ Φόρβας], by Thespis. Ἀκταίων, by Phrynichus (1). Ἄλκηστις, by Phrynichus (1). Πλευρώνιαι, by Phrynichus (1). Τάνταλος, by Phrynichus (1).

Uncertain.

Δίκαιοι, by Phrynichus (1). Δύσμαιναι ἢ Καρυάτιδες, by Pratinas. [Ἡίθεοι], by Thespis. [Ἱερεῖς], by Thespis. Παλαισταὶ σάτυροι, by Pratinas. Σύνθωκοι, by Phrynichus (1).

5. MINOR POETS OF THE FIFTH CENTURY.

The Epic Cycle.

Trojan Cycle.

Cypria. Ἀγαμέμνων, by Ion. Ἀλέξανδρος, by Nicomachus. Κύκνος, by Achaeus. Μυσοί, by Agathon, Nicomachus. Τήλεφος, by Agathon, Iophon.

Iliad. Ἀχιλλεύς, by Aristarchus, Iophon.

Little Iliad. Φιλοκτήτης, by Achaeus, Philocles (1). Φρουροί, by Ion.

Iliupersis. Ἰλίου Πέρσις, by Iophon, Nicomachus. Νεοπτόλεμος, by Nicomachus. Πολυξένη, by Nicomachus, Euripides (2). Πρίαμος, by Philocles (1).

Nosti. Ναύπλιος, by Philocles (1). Ὀρέστης, by Euripides (2). Τεῦκρος, by Ion, Nicomachus. Τυνδάρεως, by Nicomachus.

Odyssey Κύκλωψ σατυρικός, by Aristias. Λαέρτης, by Ion. Πηνελόπη, by Philocles (1).

Theban Cycle.

Oedipodeia. Οἰδιπόδεια τετραλογία, by Meletus. Οἰδίπους, by Achaeus, Nicomachus, Philocles (1), Xenocles (1).

Thebais. Ἄδραστος, by Achaeus.

Epigoni. Ἀλκμέων, by Agathon, Nicomachus. Ἀλκμέων σατυρικός, by Achaeus. Ἀλφεσίβοια, by Achaeus. Ἀμφίλοχος, by Callistratus. Ἀργεῖοι, by Ion. Ἐριφύλη, by Nicomachus. Οἰνεύς, by Philocles (1).

Other Epics.

Oechaliae Halosis. Εὐρυτίδαι, by Ion.

Outside the Epic Cycle.

Dionysiac.

Βάκχαι, by Iophon, Xenocles (1). Λυκούργεια τετραλογία, by Polyphradmon. Πενθεύς, by Iophon. Σεμέλη κεραυνουμένη, by Spintharus.

Argonautic.

Ἀθάμας σατυρικός, by Xenocles (1). Μήδεια, by Dicaeogenes, Euripides (2), Neophron. Φρῖξος, by Achaeus.

Argive.

Ἀερόπη, by Agathon. Θυέστης, by Agathon. Περσεύς, by Aristias.

Heraclean.

Ἀλκμήνη, by Ion. Ἀνταῖος, by Aristias. Γηρυόνης, by Nicomachus. Ἡρακλῆς περικαιόμενος, by Spintharus. Λικύμνιος, by Xenocles (1). Ὀμφάλη σατυρική, by Achaeus, Ion.

Attic.

Ἠριγόνη, by Philocles (1). Θησεύς, by Achaeus. Πανδιονὶς τετραλογία (including the Τηρεὺς ἢ [Ἔποψ]), by Philocles (1).

Miscellaneous.

Ἀζᾶνες, by Achaeus. Ἀκταίων, by Iophon. Ἀσκληπιός, by Aristarchus. Ἀταλάντη, by Aristias. Ἐργῖνος, by Achaeus. Ἥφαιστος σατυρικός, by Achaeus. Ἰξίων, by Callistratus. Ἶρις σατυρική, by Achaeus. Λίνος σατυρικός, by Achaeus. Λυκάων, by Xenocles (1). Μῶμος, by Achaeus. Ὀρφεύς, by Aristias. Πειρίθους, by Achaeus, [Critias]. Σίσυφος, by Critias. Τάνταλος, by Aristarchus, Aristias. Φοῖνιξ ἢ Καινεύς, by Ion. Φοῖνιξ β′, by Ion.

Uncertain.

Ἄθλα, by Achaeus. Αἴθων σατυρικός, by Achaeus. Ἀλετίδης, by Achaeus. Ἄνθος, by Agathon. Αὐλῳδοὶ σάτυροι, by Iophon. Δεξαμενός, by Iophon. [Εἰλείθυια], by Nicomachus. Κῆρες, by Aristias. Κύπριοι, by Dicaeogenes. Μέγα Δρᾶμα, by Ion. [Μετεκβαίνουσαι], by Nicomachus. Μοῖραι, by Achaeus. [Τριλογία], by Nicomachus.

6. POETS OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

The Epic Cycle.

Trojan Cycle.

Cypria. Ἑλένης Ἀπαίτησις, by Timesitheus. Κάστωρ καὶ Πολυδεύκης, by Timesitheus. Λεύκιππος, by Cleophon. Παλαμήδης, by Astydamas (2). Τήλεφος, by Cleophon, Moschion.

Iliad. Ἀχιλλεύς, by Astydamas (2), Carcinus (2), Cleophon, Diogenes, Euaretus. Ἕκτορος Λύτρα, by Dionysius, Timesitheus. Ἕκτωρ, by Astydamas (2).

Aethiopis. Ἀχιλλεὺς Θερσιτοκτόνος, by Chaeremon. [Θερσίτης]; by Chaeremon. Μέμνων, by Timesitheus.

Little Iliad. Αἴας, by Carcinus (2), Theodectes. Αἴας μαινόμενος, by Astydamas (2). Ἀπόπλους. Εὐρύπυλος. Νεοπτόλεμος, by Mimnermus. Πτωχεία. Φιλοκτήτης, by Antiphon, Theodectes.

Iliupersis. Ἑλένη, by Diogenes, Theodectes.

Nosti. Ἀνδρομάχη, by Iophon. Ἰφιγένεια, by Polyidus. Ναύπλιος, by Astydamas (2). Ὀρέστης, by Carcinus (2), Theodectes, Timesitheus. Πυλάδης, by Timesitheus. Τεῦκρος, by Euaretus.

Odyssey. Μνηστῆρες, by Timesitheus. Ὀδυσσεὺς Ψευδάγγελος.

Telegoneia. Ὀδυσσεύς, by Chaeremon.

Theban Cycle.

Oedipodeia. Οἰδίπους, by Carcinus (2), Diogenes, Theodectes.

Thebais. Ἀμφιάρεως, by Carcinus (2), Cleophon. Ἀντιγόνη, by Astydamas (2). Καπανεύς, by Timesitheus. Παρθενοπαῖος, by Astydamas (2), Dionysius the Renegade.

Epigoni. Ἀλκμέων, by Astydamas (2), Euaretus, Theodectes. Ἀλφεσίβοια by Chaeremon. Ἐπίγονοι, by Astydamas (2). Οἰνεύς, by Chaeremon. Τυδεύς by Theodectes.

Other Epics.

Danais. Δαναΐδες, by Timesitheus.

Outside the Epic Cycle.

Dionysiac.

Βάκχαι, by Cleophon. Διόνυσος, by Chaeremon. Λυκοῦργος σατυρικός, by Timocles. Σεμέλη, by Carcinus (2), Diogenes.

Argonautic.

Ἀθάμας, by Astydamas (2). Ἕλλη. Ἰάσων, by Antiphon. Μήδεια, by

Biotus, Carcinus (2), Diogenes. Μινύαι, by Chaeremon. Τυρώ, by Astydamas (2), Carcinus (2). Φρῖξος, by Philocles (2).

Argive.

Ἀερόπη, by Carcinus (2). Θυέστης, by Carcinus (2), Chaeremon, Cleophon, Diogenes. Ἰώ, by Chaeremon. Λυγκεύς, by Theodectes. Χρύσιππος, by Diogenes.

Heraclean.

Ἀλκμήνη, by Astydamas (2), Dionysius. Ἡρακλῆς, by Diogenes, Timesitheus. Ἡρακλῆς σατυρικός, by Astydamas (2).

Attic.

Ἀλόπη, by Carcinus (2). Ἠριγόνη, by Cleophon.

Historical.

Θεμιστοκλῆς, by Moschion. Μαύσωλος, by Theodectes.

Miscellaneous.

Ἄδωνις, by Dionysius. Ἀκταίων, by Cleophon. Βελλεροφόντης, by Astydamas (2). Ἑρμῆς, by Astydamas (2). Ζηνὸς γοναί, by Timesitheus. Ἰξίων, by Timesitheus. Κινύρας. Λήδα, by Dionysius. Λυκάων, by Astydamas (2). Μελέαγρος, by Antiphon. [Σκύλλα]. Φοῖνιξ, by Astydamas (2).

Uncertain.

Ἀγὴν σατυρικός, by Python. Δεξαμενός, by Cleophon. Κένταυρος, by Chaeremon. [Λιμός], by Dionysius. Φεραῖοι, by Moschion.

7. LATER POETS.

The Epic Cycle.

Trojan Cycle.

Cypria. Πρωτεσίλαος σατυρικός, by Harmodius. Παλαμήδης σατυρικός, by Theodorus.

Iliad. Ἀστραγαλισταί, by Alexander Aetolus.

Little Iliad. Αἴας σατυρικός, by Polemaeus.

Nosti. Ἑρμιόνη, by Theodorus. Κλυταιμήστρα, by Polemaeus. Ναύπλιος, by Lycophron.

Telegoneia. Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀκανθοπλήξ, by Apollodorus. Τηλέγονος, by Lycophron.

Theban Cycle.

Oedipodeia. Λάιος, by Lycophron. Οἰδίπους α' and β', by Lycophron. Χρύσιππος, by Lycophron.

Outside the Epic Cycle.

Dionysiac.

Πενθεύς, by Lycophron.

Argive.

Ἀνδρομέδα, by Lycophron. Θυέστης, by Lycophron. Πελοπίδαι, by Lycophron.

Heraclean.

Ἀμφιτρύων, by Aeschylus Alexandrinus. Δάφνις ἢ Λιτυέρσης σατυρικός, by Sositheus. Ἡρακλῆς, by Lycophron.

Attic.

Ἱππόλυτος, by Lycophron.

Historical.

Θεμιστοκλῆς, by Philiscus. Μαραθώνιοι, by Lycophron. Σωσαννίη, by Nicolaus.

Miscellaneous.

Ἄδωνις, by Ptolemy. Ἀέθλιος, by Sositheus. Αἴολος, by Lycophron. Ἀλήτης, by Lycophron. Ἐλεφήνωρ, by Lycophron. Μελέαγρος, by Sosiphanes. Μενέδημος σάτυροι, by Lycophron. Νιόβη, by Meliton.

Uncertain.

Αἰολίδης, by Lycophron. Ἕλληνες, by Apollodorus. Θυτὴς σατυρικός, by Theodorus. Ἱκέται, by Lycophron. Ἱκέτιδες, by Apollodorus. Κασσανδρεῖς, by Lycophron. Ὀρφανός, by Lycophron. Πέρσαι σάτυροι, by Anaxion. Σύμμαχοι, by Lycophron. Τεκνοκτόνος, by Apollodorus.

INDEX.

In the following index only the more noticeable poets and dramas have been included. A complete list of the ancient tragic writers and their works will be found in the appendices.

A.

Achaeus, of Eretria, dramatic career of, p. 408.
Achilles, the, of Aristarchus, 418.
Actors, the first actor introduced by Thespis, 27. Significance of the innovation, 28. Actor's part taken by Thespis, 29. Second actor introduced by Aeschylus, 61. Increased importance of actor's part, 62. Third actor due to Sophocles, 138. Importance of the innovation, 138. Sophocles not himself an actor, 142. Increasing use of third actor, 181. Cumbersome dress of Greek actors, 326. Importance of actors in later times, 421. Guilds of, 439 (note), 456, 457. Laws of Honorius and Arcadius concerning, 460.
Acts, the, in Greek tragedy, when first fixed at five, 349. Slightness of the division between, 350.
Addaeus, his epigram on Euripides, 216.
Aegyptians, the, of Aeschylus, 102.
Aerope, the, of Carcinus, 431.
Aeschines, his praise of Euripides, 318.
Aeschylus, imitates Phrynichus, 45. His birth and early training, 46. Takes part in the Persian War, 47. His dramatic career, 48. Trial for impiety, 49. Retirement to Sicily, 51. Political opinions, 54. Anecdotes concerning, 57. Death, 58. Funeral and honours, 59. Portraits of, 59. Introduces a second actor, 61. Improvements in the structure of tragedy, 62. Earnestness of moral purpose, 65, 87. Improvements in the mode of representation, 67. Choice of subjects, 70. Treatment of plots, 71. Knowledge of stage effect, 73. Disregard of probability, 74. Boldness of conception, 75. Love of the marvellous, 76. His characters, 76. Tenderness of feeling in, 78. Style of diction, 80. Coinage of new words, 80. Richness of his language, 81. Occasional obscurity, 84. Imitations of Homer, 85. Treatment of the mythology, 86, 112. Conception of Zeus, 88. Theory of divine government, 90. Punishment of sin, 91. Not a fatalist, 93. Views on immortality, 95. Use of trilogies and tetralogies, 96. The extant plays, 99. Supplices, 101. Persae, 103. Septem, 106. Prometheus, 109. Oresteia, 114. Reputation among his contemporaries, 121. Decline of his popularity, 122, 448. Imitated by Sophocles, 143, 144, 162. Prologues of, 351. Length of his choruses, 358. Treatment of the commus, 361.

Paucity of stage lyrics in, 362. Treatment of the iambic, 372. Lyrical metres, 376. Tragedy cultivated by his descendants, 413. Admiration of Dionysius for, 432.
Aetna, foundation of, 50.
Agamemnon, the, of Aeschylus, fine stage-effects in, 74. Disregard of probability in, 75. Tone of, 76, 117. Character of Clytaemnestra, 77. The Cassandra scene, 79, 117. Simple structure of, 116. Humorous scene in, 117. Use of irony in, 176. Parodus in, 355. Title of, 396.
Agathon, introduces interludes into tragedy, 252. Life of, 409. Character, 410. His originality, 410. His language, 411.
Agen, the, satyric play, 395.
Agias, poet of the epic cycle, 115.
Ajax, the, of Sophocles, fine scenic effect in, 151. Prevalence of rhetoric in, 168. Use of tragic irony, 176, 177. Celebrity of, 180. The parodus, 181, 355. Date, 181. Moral purpose of, 186. Source of the legend, 186. Suicide on the stage, 187. Local allusions, 187. Structure of, 187. Hyporchema in, 357.
Alcestis, the, of Euripides, seventeenth in order of production, 208. Character of Alcestis, 222. Tragi-comic in tone, 223. Admired by Alfieri, 232. Verrall's version of the plot, 262 (note). Substituted for the usual satyric play, 286. Defects of, 286. Modern versions of the fable, 287. Treatment of the legend, 288. The closing scene, 288.
Alcibiades, supposed allusion to in the Philoctetes, 197. Connexion of Euripides with, 275.
Alcmaeon, the, of Astydamas, 430.
Alcon, connexion of Sophocles with, 131.
Alexander, of Aetolia, 441.
Alexander the Great, his admiration for Euripides, 318. Friendship for Theodectes, 425. Fondness for theatrical shows, 438.
Alexandria, importance of, 439. Magnificence of its dramatic contests, 440. The Pleiad, 441. Subsequent course of tragedy at, 443.
Alfieri, his Oreste, 147. Admiration for Euripides, 232. His Alceste Seconda, 287. His characters, 230, 335.
Amphiaraïa, the, 436.
Ἀναγνώρισις, 346.
Ἀναγνωστικοί, 426.
Anapaests, their connexion with the parodus, 355. Varied use of Doricisms in, 369. Employment of, 374. In satyric plays, 391.
Anaxagoras, influence on Euripides, 206, 265 (note), 271 (note). References to in Euripides, 206 (note). Prosecution for impiety, 265 (note), 289. Anaxagorean doctrines in Euripides, 270.
Anaximander, 87.
Andromache, the, of Euripides, not produced at Athens, 208, 297 (note). Character of Hermione, 219. Supposed political purpose of, 276. Date, and general character, 297.
Andromeda, the, of Euripides, unique character of, 223. Without the usual prologue, 248 (note). Celebrity of, 223, 282. Produced along with the Helena, 304.
Anicius, his dramatic shows, 456.
Ἀνθηρὰ ἁρμονία, 161.
Ἄνθος, name of a play by Agathon, 395.
Antigone, the, of Euripides, 183.
Antigone, the, of Sophocles, its relation to the Septem, 107. Connected by tradition with the death of Sophocles, 136. Improbability of one of the incidents in, 150. Character of Creon, 157; of Antigone, 158, 185; of the watchman, 160. Diction of, 162, 167. Celebrity of, 179. The parodus, 181, 355. Structure of the iambic verse, 181. Date, 181. Connexion with the generalship of Sophocles, 182. Order of production, 183. Origin of the legend, 183. Moral purpose of, 184.
Antiochus, the Great, his theatrical shows, 438.

Antiope, the, of Euripides, celebrity of, 282.
Antiphon, his opinion of Agathon, 410.
Antistrophic arrangement, in the choral odes, 378; in the commi, 379; in the stage lyrics, 380; in the dialogue, 381. Not carried to extremes, 384. The 'grosse responsion,' 384. Schmidt's Eurhythmy, 388.
Antony, his theatrical shows, 438.
Aphrodisias, festival at, 436. Tragedy at, 445, 452.
Apollo, patron of poetry and music, 6. Unfavourable representation of in Euripides, 264.
Apsephion, his conduct at the dramatic contest, 128.
Archaeology, disregarded by Aeschylus, 106.
Archelaus, king of Macedon, invites Euripides to his court, 214. His relations with Euripides, 215. Assassination of, 215. Agathon at his court, 409.
Archelaus, the philosopher, a friend of Euripides, 207.
Archilochus, his dithyrambs, 14. Influence on tragedy, 33. His iambics, 372.
Archippe, 132.
Areopagus, the, tries Aeschylus, 49. Acquires supreme power, 53. Loses its political significance, 56. Praised by Aeschylus, 56. Scene of the trial of Orestes, 119 (note).
Argos, alliances of Athens with, 57, 291 (note), 296, 297.
Arion, his improvements in the dithyramb, 17. Inventor of the 'tragic style,' 22. Writes 'tragedies,' 22, 25.
Aristarchus, of Tegea, 418.
Aristarchus, the grammarian, his canon, 404.
Aristeides, his rivalry with Themistocles, 54.
Aristias, 412.
Ariston, son of Sophocles, 132. His dramatic career, 414.
Aristophanes, the comic poet, admires Phrynichus, 45. On the functions of tragic poetry, 66. Criticisms of Aeschylus, 75, 84, 122. Of Sophocles, 135, 161. Of Euripides, 212, 226, 230, 248, 257, 258, 259, 268, 304. His Thesmophoriazusae, 211. Ridicule of Agathon, 410, 411; of Morsimus, 414; of Carcinus and Xenocles, 415; of Meletus, 417. His doubts about Iophon, 414.
Aristophanes, the grammarian, his criticisms of Euripides, 319. Division of lyric verses into cola, 387. His canon, 404.
Aristotle, his opinion of Aeschylus, 123. His views on the chorus, 123. On the importance of the plot, 193. Criticisms of Sophocles, 201. Criticisms of Euripides, 259, 267 (note), 289, 290, 308, 316, 319. Views on the mythological subjects of tragedy, 328, 332. Comparison of history and poetry, 335. Remarks on the best characters for tragedy, 336. On the three unities, 340 (note). On crimes suitable for the stage, 347. Definition of the parodus, 354, 358; of the commi and stage lyrics, 361 (note); of the stasimon, 356 (note). Remarks on tragic diction, 367. On the iambic metre, 374. Quotations from Agathon, 412. Criticisms on the poets of the fourth century, 421, 423 (note), 424 (notes). Suggested extension of tragic subjects, 422. Admiration for Theodectes, 424, 426. References to Sthenelus, 418; to Carcinus, 431; to the 'literary' drama, 426.
Armenia, Greek tragedy in, 439.
Asclepius, connexion of Sophocles with, 131.
Astydamas, the elder, 429.
Astydamas, the younger, 429.
Atalanta, the, of Aeschylus, 99.
Atellanae, 3.
Athenians, their relation to Aeschylus, 52. Their feeling about oracles, 264.
Athletics, opinion of Euripides concerning, 280.
Augustine, his remarks on tragedy and comedy, 460.
Αὐστηρὰ ἁρμονία, 161.
Axionicus, his Lover of Euripides, 318.

B.

Bacchae, the, of Euripides, use of tragic irony in, 176, 177, 312. Written in old age, 208. The chorus in, 256. Purpose of, 256, 313. Date, 311. General character, 312.
Bacchantes, the, 7.
Background, the, origin of, 30.
Bellerophon, the, of Euripides, 268 (note), 270.
Bentley, on the Thespian drama, 34.
Bion, son of Aeschylus, 413.
Boeotia, performance of tragedies in, 436, 445.
Brauron, curious rites at, 306.
Browning, his version of the Alcestis legend, 287.
Brutus, his dramatic shows, 456.
Byron, his opinion of the Prometheus, 114; of the Medea, 233.

C.

Calderon, his Statue of Prometheus, 114. His religious dramas, 323.
Callippides, actor of Sophocles, 136.
Canon, the, of tragic poets, 404 (note). Practically confined to the three great dramatists, 404.
Capture of Miletus, the, of Phrynichus, 44.
Carcinus, the elder, 415.
Carcinus, the younger, 431.
Centaur, the, of Chaeremon, 427.
Centaurs, among the followers of Dionysus, 8.
Cephisophon, friend of Euripides, 210, 211.
Cercyon, the, of Carcinus, 431.
Chaeremon, dramatic style of, 426. His Centaur, 427.
Changeling, the, of Middleton, 175.
Characters, the, in Aeschylus, 76. In Sophocles, 156. In Euripides, 218, 222, 229, 298. Mostly of exalted rank, 332. Types rather than individuals in Greek tragedy, 334. Yet natural and life-like, 335. The principal character of a tragedy, 336.
Charitesia, the, 436.
Chinese drama, the, 2.
Choephori, the, of Aeschylus, recognition scene in, 74, 330. Celebrity of, 101. The plot, 118. Modification of the legend by Aeschylus, 118. Compared with the Electra of Sophocles, 139, 146.
Choerile, wife of Euripides, 210.
Choerilus, his career, 39.
Choral dances, common in Greece, 15.
Χορευτής, 27.
Chorus, the, diversified with spoken interludes, 19, 27. Its significance diminished by Aeschylus, 62. Character of in Aeschylus, 78. Further reduced by Sophocles, 138. Number increased by Sophocles, 142. Character of the Sophoclean chorus, 152. Plays a double part, 153. Its share in the action, 155. Antiquated in the time of Euripides, 251. Its odes converted into interludes, 252, 410. Contents and language of the Euripidean chorus, 252. Its share in the dialogue, 255. The chorus in the Phoenissae and the Bacchae, 255, 256. Influence of the chorus on the structure of Greek tragedy, 341. Fusion of the lyrical and dramatic elements in Greek tragedy, 348. Division into acts due to the chorus, 350. Songs of the chorus, 354. Songs by chorus and actors, 359, 362. Decline of in the fourth century, 451. Occasionally discarded after the fourth century, 452. But frequently retained, 452, 453. Character of the later chorus, 454.
Chrysippus, his admiration for the Medea, 321.
Church, the, attitude of towards the ancient stage, 460.
Cicero, his opinion of Sophocles, 202.
City Dionysia, 8. Chiefly devoted to tragedy, 14. Its first establishment, 38. Popularity of new tragedies at, 420, 444.
Cola, 386.
Comedy, origin of, 13.
Comic scenes, in Aeschylus, 78, 117. In Sophocles, 160. In Euripides, 223.

Commus, the, origin of, 359. Character of, 360. Varied structure of, 361. Substituted for parodi and stasima, 355, 358. Less frequent in Euripides, 255.
Comus, the, 13.
Contests, in dithyrambic poetry, 23. In tragedy at Athens, 37. At Dionysiac festivals, 435. At other festivals, 436. At Alexandria, 440.
Corneille, views on the leading character in a tragedy, 337. On the unities, 343. On crimes most suitable for the stage, 347.
Costume, of the actors, improved by Aeschylus, 68. Innovations of Sophocles in, 142. Realistic in Euripides, 220. Character of, 326.
Crane, the, a kind of dance, 15. A stage machine, 68.
Crantor, his admiration for Euripides, 321.
Crassus, fate of, 439.
Crates, the Cynic, plays of, 429.
Creon, his character as drawn by Sophocles in different plays, 157.
Cresphontes, the, of Euripides, fine scene in, 244. Political allusions in, 275. Date of, 275 (note). Celebrity of, 282.
Crete, choral dances in, 15.
Critias, dramatic writings of, 416.
Cyclops, the, date of, 316. General character of, 317.
Cyrene, tragedy at, 453, 454.
Cyzicus, tragedy at, 445.

D.

Danae, the, of Euripides, 267 (note).
Danaides, the, of Aeschylus, 102.
Dancing, excellence of Phrynichus in regard to, 44. Improved by Aeschylus, 69. In the Septem, 109. In the choral odes, 356. Character of in tragedy, 357. In satyric drama, 391.
Decamnichus, assassin of Archelaus, 215.
Delos, choral dances at, 15. Tragedies at, 452.
Delphi, choral dances at, 15.
Delphians, the, reply of Aeschylus to, 57.
Delphic oracle, its partiality, 264. Attacked by Euripides, 264.
Destiny, conception of in Aeschylus, 90.
Deus ex machina, the, in the Philoctetes, 149. How used by Euripides, 245. The speeches of in Euripides, 246. Use of in the Iphigeneia in Aulide, 314.
Δεξίων, 131.
Dialogue, the, introduced into the dithyramb, 19. Extended by Thespis, 27. Character of the Thespian dialogue, 31. Metrical form of in Thespis, 32. Not epic in style, 33. Further developed by Aeschylus, 62; by Sophocles, 138. Division of lines between different speakers, 181. Dialogues between chorus and actors, 138, 255. Prevalence of dialogue over action in Greek tragedy, 327. Prevalence of narrative, 32, 150, 348. Absence of soliloquies and asides, 349. Division into acts, 349. Symmetrical structure of, 381. The 'grosse responsion,' 384. Unaccompanied by music, 386.
Διδασκαλία, 96, 398, 406.
Didymus, his criticisms of Euripides, 319.
Diogenes, the cynic, his plays, 428.
Dion Chrysostomus, his opinion of Aeschylus, 124; of Sophocles, 202; of Euripides, 320.
Dionysiac festivals, contribute to the spread of Greek tragedy, 435. In Attica, 8. Trieteric festivals of Dionysus, 9. See City Dionysia, Rural Dionysia, Lenaea.
Dionysiacus, the, of Sophocles, 391.
Dionysius, the critic, his remarks on Aeschylus, 84. On Sophocles, 161, 163, 186 (note), 202. On Euripides, 257.
Dionysius, the renegade, his literary forgeries, 428.
Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, his dramatic career, 432. Witticisms

concerning, 433. His poetical merits, 434.
Dionysus, connexion of his worship with the drama, 4, 435. Introduction of his cultus into Greece, 5. His attributes, 5. The inventor of wine, 6. Patron of poetry and music, 6. Character of Dionysiac poetry, 6. His followers, 7. His festivals in Attica, 8. Orgiastic worship of, 9. Artistic representations of, 10.
Diphilus, his admiration for Euripides, 321.
Dithyramb, the, source of tragedy, 14. Its origin, 14. Etymology of the word, 16 (note). Early character, 14. Celebrates the legends of Dionysus, 16. At first a mere folk-song, 16. Improved by Arion, 17. Its musical character, 18. Introduction of spoken dialogues, 19. General tone of, 20. Called a 'tragedy,' 22. The prize a goat, 22. Separation of tragedy and the dithyramb, 23. Later history, 23.
Dorian dialect, the, used in the lyrics of Greek tragedy, 367. Character of the Dorian poetic dialect, 367. How modified by the Attic poets, 368. Its use in the anapaests, 369.
Dorian music, its employment in the dithyramb, 18.
Dorians, their share in the invention of tragedy, 25. Their lyrical metres, 376.
Drama, the, gradual development of, 1. First perfected by the Greeks, 2. The Chinese, 2. The Indian, 2. The Mediaeval, 3. Its connexion with religious worship, 4.
Dryden, his Oedipus, 150.
Dymas, 446.

E.

Eccyclema, the, invented by Aeschylus, 69.
Education, opinions of Euripides concerning, 280.
Εἰσενεγκεῖν σατύρους, 19.
Εἴσοδοι, 353.
Electra, the, of Euripides, realistic treatment of the myth in, 219, 301. Electra's speech over the body of Aegisthus, 234. Irrelevance of one of the choral odes, 254. Date, 301. Defects of, 301, 302. Not representative of the poet's genius, 303. The recognition scene in, 330. Story about the monody in, 363.
Electra, the, of Sophocles, the messenger's speech in, 139, 151. The plot compared with that in the Choephori, and in modern imitations, 146. Unity of action in, 148. Double character of the chorus, 154. Character of Electra, 158, 192. Electra's speech in reply to her mother, 168. Use of tragic irony in, 176. Celebrity of, 179. Date, 181. Tone different from that of the Choephori, 191. Recognition scene in, 330. Commus in, 360.
Elegies, by Aeschylus, 49. By Simonides, 49, 51.
Ἐλεός, 20.
Ἐμβόλιμα, 155, 252, 410.
Ἐμμέλεια, 356.
Empedocles, doctrines of in Euripides, 234, 272.
Ἐν δόσει, 37, 38.
Ennius, 455.
Epacria, 27.
Epeisodia, 353.
Ephialtes, his attack on the Areopagus, 56. His treaty with Argos, 57.
Epic Cycle, the, a favourite source of subjects with Aeschylus, 71. Ascribed to Homer, 71. Contained the Orestean legend, 115. Its version of the death of Clytaemnestra, 118. Largely used by Sophocles, 143. Less frequently by Euripides, 238.
Epic poetry, its influence on the development of Greek tragedy, 32, 322. Epic diction in tragedy, 366, 368.
Epicharmus, satirises Aeschylus, 51.
Epigenes, called a 'tragic poet,' 22, 25.
Epilogues, frequent in Euripides, 245. Spoken by the deus ex machina, 246. Their character, 246. Spoken by ordinary personages, 247. Later history of, 352.

Epiparodus, the, 355.
Erigone, legend concerning, 26.
Ἐρινύες, 120.
Eubulus, his imitations of Euripides, 321.
Eumenides, the, of Aeschylus, terror caused by, 51. Political allusions in, 55, 56. Stage effects in, 74. Subject of, 119. Mode of treatment, 119. Legend about the Furies, 120. Physical aspect of the Furies, 121. Termination of, 352. Parodus in, 354. Epiparodus in, 355.
Euphantus, 446.
Euphorion, son of Aeschylus, 413.
Eurhythmy, Schmidt's theory concerning, 388.
Εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζειν, 257.
Euripides, his criticisms of Aeschylus, 109. His relations with Sophocles, 134. Birth, 204. Parentage, 205. Education, 206. Love of philosophy, 206. Connexion with Anaxagoras, Socrates, and other philosophers, 206. Dramatic career, 208. Number of plays, 208. Ill success in the theatre, 209. Domestic life, 210. Character, 212. Personal appearance, 214. Retires to Macedonia, 214. Death and burial, 215. General characteristics of his poetry, 217. His realism, 218. Tenderness of feeling, 221. Love dramas, 222. New types of plays, 223, 225. Ethical tone, 224. Modern criticisms on, 226. Popular with modern poets, 232. Philosophy and rhetoric in, 235. Choice of subjects, 238. Free handling of the legends, 239. Plots, 239. Unity of action, 242. Carelessness in details, 243. Stage effects, 244. Use of epilogues, 245, 352. Prologues, 247. Decline of the chorus, 251. Contents of the choral odes, 252. Language of the choral odes, 254. The chorus in the Phoenissae and Bacchae, 255. His language, 256. Varieties of style, 258. Occasional carelessness of diction, 260. Attitude towards the national religion, 261. Attacks on oracles, 264. Not an enemy of the state religion, 265. Philosophical theories, 269. Physical theories, 271. Views on immortality, 272. Supposed pessimism, 273. Political opinions, 274. Allusions to contemporary politics, 275. Views on social questions, 277. Misogynism, 278. Views about women, 279; about education, 280. The extant plays, 280. Chronology of his plays, 282. Rhesus, 284. Alcestis, 285. Medea, 289. Heracleidae, 291. Hippolytus, 292. Hecuba, 295. Supplices, 295. Andromache, 297. Hercules Furens, 298. Troades, 300. Electra, 301. Helena, 303. Ion, 304. Iphigeneia in Tauris, 305. Orestes, 309. Phoenissae, 310. Bacchae, 311. Iphigeneia in Aulide, 314. Cyclops, 316. Reputation among the ancients, 317. Treatment of the commus, 361. Extends the use of stage lyrics, 362. Revival of the trochaic tetrameter, 371. Treatment of the iambic, 373. Lyrical metres, 376. His son or nephew, 414. Imitated by later poets, 423. Admiration of Dionysius for, 432. Frequent reproduction of his plays in later times, 448.
Euripides, the younger, 414.
Evodianus, 456.
Ἐξ ὑποβολῆς, 32.
Ἐξ ὑπολήψεως, 32.
Ἐξάρχειν, 14, 19.
Exodus, the, in Greek tragedy, 352.

F.

Fate, conception of in Aeschylus, 90.
Flute, the, employed in Dionysiac music, 6, 18.
Foreigners, views of Euripides concerning, 278.
Forgeries, literary, 428.
French, classical drama of the, its artificial dignity, 159, 335. Aversion to bodily suffering, 325. Character-drawing in, 334. Skilful structure of the plots in, 345. Observance of the unities in, 343. Versification, 374.
Furies, their functions in the theogony

of Aeschylus, 90. Worshipped at Athens as the Benign Ones, 120 (note). Their settlement at Athens, 120. Physical aspect in the Eumenides, 121.

G.

Gaius Iulius, 446.
Gela, Aeschylus dies there, 50.
Glaucus Pontius, the, of Aeschylus, 70, 103.
Glaucus Potnieus, the, of Aeschylus, 103.
Goat, sacrificed at the performances of the dithyramb, 22. Prize of the successful poet, 22.
Goethe, his imitation of the Prometheus, 114; of the Helena and Iphigeneia, 233. Admiration for Euripides, 233. His Iphigenie, 308. His Faust, 323.
Γραφικοί, 426.

H.

Halae, curious rites at, 306.
Harp, the, employed in the worship of Apollo, 6. Not used in the dithyramb, 18.
Hecate, a name of Artemis Tauropolus, 306. Confused with Agamemnon's daughter, 307.
Hector, the, of Astydamas, 430.
Hecuba, the, of Euripides, date and general character of, 295. Parodus in, 355.
Helena, the, of Euripides, peculiar style of, 233. Purpose of the deus ex machina in, 246. Attack on oracles in, 265. Date, 303. Free treatment of the legend, 303. Compared with other plays of the same period, 304.
Heracleidae, the, of Euripides, moral purpose of, 266. Political allusions in, 275. Date, 291. General character of, 292.
Heracleides, of Pontus, his literary forgeries, 428. Deceived by Dionysius, 428.
Heracleitus, doctrines of in Euripides, 234, 274.
Hercules, a favourite character in satyric plays, 393.
Hercules Furens, the, of Euripides, character of the prologue in, 247 (note). Free treatment of the legend, 298, 299. Structure, 299. Date, 300. Continued popularity on the stage, 457.
Herodotus, his connexion with Sophocles, 136 (note). His language compared with that of the tragic poets, 365.
Hieron, invites Aeschylus to Sicily, 50.
Hippolytus, the, of Euripides, delicate treatment of the myth in, 231. The nurse in, 234. Compared with the Phèdre of Racine, 240. Use of the deus ex machina, 245. Speech of Athene, 246. Action of the chorus in, 252. Purpose of, 266. Attack on women in, 210, 211, 279. Date and character, 292. The second Hippolytus compared with the first, 293. Character of Phaedra, 294. Use of Doricisms in, 369.
Homer, the Epic Cycle ascribed to him, 71. Influence on Aeschylus, 85. Version of the Orestean legend in, 115. Imitated by Sophocles, 202; by Euripides, 311, 317. Homeric diction in tragedy, 366.
Homer, the tragic poet, 441.
Homoloïa, the, 436.
Horace, his description of the Thespian drama, 30. Of the satyric drama, 42. Of the innovations of Aeschylus, 68 (note). Remarks on the exhibition of horrors on the stage, 326. On the number of acts in a play, 349.
Hyporchemata, character of, 357.

I.

Iambic trimeter, the, probably used by Thespis, 32. Its structure in Sophocles, 181 (note); in Euripides, 283 (note). Borrowed from the 'iambic' poets, 372. Treated with increasing freedom by the tragic poets, 372. General character of, 374. In the satyric drama, 391.
Iasus, tragedy at, 452.

Icaria, situation of, 26. Centre of Dionysiac worship, 26.
Icarus, legend concerning, 26.
Idealism, in Aeschylus, 77. In Sophocles, 157. Partly abandoned by Euripides, 218. Ideal character of Greek tragedy, 324.
Ἴδια (μέρη), 361.
Inachus, the, of Sophocles, 392.
Indian drama, the, 2.
Ion, of Chios, with Aeschylus at the Isthmian games, 57. His story about Sophocles, 136. Life of, 406. Character, 406. Literary works, 407. Style of his dramas, 408.
Ion, the, of Euripides, autobiographical passage in, 212. The plot of the modern type, 240. Faults of treatment in, 241, 243. Attacks on Apollo and the Delphic oracle, 263, 264, 267, 305. Date, 304. Treatment of the legend, 305. Parodus in, 354. Commus in, 360.
Iophon, son of Sophocles, 132. Supposed prosecution of his father, 133. Assisted by his father in his plays, 133. Epitaph on his father, 134. Connexion with the Antigone, 185 (note). Dramatic career, 414.
Iphigeneia, a name of Artemis, 306. Daughter of Agamemnon, 306.
Iphigeneia in Aulide, the, of Euripides, character of Agamemnon in, 219. Realistic scene in, 219. Character of Iphigeneia, 222. Without the usual prologue, 248, 314. Action of the chorus in, 252. Date, 314. Interpolations in, 314. Conclusion of, 314. General character of, 315. The description of the sacrifice, 316.
Iphigeneia in Tauris, the, of Euripides, the deus ex machina in, 246. Structure of, 242. Romantic character of, 304. Origin and development of the legend, 306. Celebrity of, 308. Compared with Goethe's Iphigenie, 308.
Irony, in tragedy, 174. Two kinds, 175. Conscious irony, 175. Unconscious irony, 176. In the Bacchae, 314.
Italy, performances of Greek tragedy in, 57.
Ixion, the, of Euripides, 99, 267 (note).

K.

Καινὴ τραγῳδία, 25.
Καινοὶ τραγῳδοί, 420, 445.
Καινὸς ἀγών, 445.
Καρκίνου ποιήματα, 432.
Κιθάρισμα ἐκ Βακχῶν, 450.
Κοινὴ ἁρμονία, 161.
Κυκλεύς, 17.
Κύκλιος χορός, 17.
Κωμάζειν, 13.
Κωμῳδία, 13.

L.

Lactantius, on the drama, 460.
Laius, the, of Aeschylus, 106.
Language, the, of Aeschylus, 80. Of Sophocles, 161. Of Euripides, 254, 256. Of Greek poetry, 364. The tragic dialogue, 364, 365; written in old Attic, 365; intermixed with epic, 366. Doricism of the lyrics, 367; varies in different parts, 368. Excellence of the tragic dialect, 370.
Lemnians, the, of Aeschylus, 99.
Lemnians, the, of Sophocles, 144.
Lenaea, 8. Chiefly devoted to comedy, 14. Plays of Sophocles exhibited at, 128, 183. New tragedies at, 420.
Lessing, on the prologues of Euripides, 249.
Libanius, on the extinction of Greek tragedy, 457.
Lists of plays, 402.
Livius Andronicus, 455.
Λογεῖον, 348.
Longinus, on Sophocles, 186 (note). On Euripides, 259 (note). On Ion, 408.
Lope de Vega, his advice to dramatists, 344.
Love, as a subject for tragedy, rare in Aeschylus, 78; and in Sophocles, 160. Frequent in Euripides, 222. His love dramas unjustly censured, 230. The Hippolytus, 231, 293.
Lucian, allusions to Euripides, 320; to

the reproduction of old plays, 444; to the tragic actors, 457.
Lycophron, his Menedemus, 395. His dramatic career, 441.
Lycurgeia, the, of Aeschylus, 97. Its structure, 98.
Lycurgeia, the, of Polyphradmon, 412.
Lycurgus, his praise of Euripides, 318.
Lycurgus, the, of Aeschylus, 391.
Lynceus, the, of Theodectes, 426.
Lyric poetry, its influence on the development of tragedy, 322.
Lyrics, the, in tragedy, various kinds of, 353. The parodus, 354. The epiparodus, 355. The stasima, 356. Hyporchemata, 357. Occasional lyrics, 359. The commus, 359. Lyrics sung by actors alone, 362. Variety of the metres in, 375. Source of the lyrical metres in tragedy, 376. Symmetrical structure of the lyrical odes, 378; of the commi, 379; of the stage lyrics, 380. Division into cola and periods, 386. Eurhythmy, 388.
Lysander, commanded to permit the burial of Sophocles, 132. Moved to tears by Electra's monody, 363.
Lysimachia, the, 436.

M.

Macbeth, 79, 175.
Machinery, the, of the stage, mostly invented by Aeschylus, 69. More frequent in his later plays, 69.
Macrobius, on Aeschylus, 51.
Magna Graecia, popularity of the drama in, 454.
Magnesia, in Lydia, tragedy at, 445.
Magnesia, in Thessaly, visited by Euripides, 214.
Maid's Tragedy, the, 117.
Makers of the Bridal Chamber, the, of Aeschylus, 102.
Marlowe, his influence on the English drama, 67. His verse, 374.
Masks, introduced by Thespis, 29. Improved by Choerilus, 39; by Aeschylus, 68. Introduction of female masks, 45.
Massinger, versification of, 374.
Mausolus, eulogy of Theodectes on, 425.
Μηχανή, 69, 246.
Medea, the, of Euripides, not successful at first, 209. A new type of tragedy, 225. Character of Jason, 230. Admired by Byron, 233. Epilogue in, 247. Prologue, 247. Arrangement of opening scenes, 249. The chorus in, 252. Date, 289. Characteristics of, 289. Indebtedness of Euripides to Neophron, 290. Symmetrical arrangement of Medea's speech, 383.
Μέγα Δρᾶμα, play by Ion, 395.
Melanippe, the, alteration of the first line in, 268 (note).
Meletus, 417.
Melito, wife of Euripides, 210.
Menander, his admiration for Euripides, 321.
Menedemus, his opinion of Sophocles, 201.
Menedemus, the, of Lycophron, 395.
Μέρος τραγῳδίας, 349.
Metres, the, in the early dialogue, 20. In the dialogue of Thespis, 32. The iambic in Sophocles, 181; in Euripides, 283. Anapaests, 181, 355, 374. The trochaic tetrameter, 20, 32, 283, 371. The iambic, 372. The lyrical metres, 375. Antistrophic arrangement, 378. Division into cola and periods, 386. Eurhythmy, 388. Metres of satyric drama, 391. Variety of metres in Greek tragedy, 377.
Midsummer Night's Dream, 223.
Milton, his Satan, 112.
Mimes, popularity of in later times, 459.
Misogynism of Euripides, 278.
Monodies, 363.
Morsimus, 414.
Museia, the, 436.
Music, innovations of Sophocles, 142; of Agathon, 411. Encroaches upon the poetry, 254. Confined mainly to the chorus in the early tragedy, 362. Character of Greek vocal music, 375. Not employed in the dialogue, 386.
Myrmidons, the, of Aeschylus, commencement of, 351.

Mysians, the, of Aeschylus, 99.
Mythology, free treatment of by Aeschylus, 118, 119 (note), 120, 121; by Sophocles, 186, 196; by Euripides, 183, 194, 285, 288, 289, 295, 297, 299, 307; by Astydamas, 430; by Carcinus, 431. Licence permitted to the tragic poets in regard to, 331. Fondness of Euripides for antiquarian details, 238.

N.

Naevius, 455.
Naples, Greek tragedy at, 454, 456.
Narrative speeches, essential to the early drama, 31. Less frequent in Aeschylus, 62. Retained by Sophocles, 150. In the Trachiniae, 189. In Greek tragedy, 348.
Neophron, his Medea, 290. His dramatic career, 418.
Neoptolemus, the actor, 450.
New tragedies, at the City Dionysia, 420, 444. At the Lenaea, 444. In various places down to the Christian era, 445.
Nicias, general along with Sophocles, 130.
Nicolaus, of Damascus, 447.
Nicostrata, wife of Sophocles, 132.

O.

Oedipodeia, the, of Aeschylus, 97. Its structure, 98. Component parts, 106.
Oedipodeia, the, of Meletus, 417.
Oedipus, the, of Aeschylus, 106. Probable character of, 192.
Oedipus, the, of Euripides, 194.
Oedipus Coloneus, the, of Sophocles, said to have been recited at his trial, 133. Written in old age, 128 (note), 134, 200. Possibly the source of the story about the trial, 134. Character of Theseus, 157; of Creon, 157; of Oedipus, 199. Celebrity of, 179. Date, 180. Tone of, 198. Conduct of the plot, 199. Reflects the feelings of Sophocles, 200. Commus in, 360.
Oedipus Tyrannus, the, of Sophocles, skilful use of three actors in, 139. Improbability of the legend, 150. Character of Creon, 157. Tragic irony in, 178. Celebrity of, 179. Date, 181. Relation to the Oedipus of Aeschylus, 193. Interest mainly in the plot, 193. Compared with Voltaire's Oedipe, 339. Conclusion of, 344.
Oenomaus, the Cynic, plays of, 447.
Οἱ περὶ Αἰσχύλον, 431.
Oracles, hostility against in Athens, 264.
Orchestra, the, occupied by the chorus, 348, 453.
Oresteia, the, of Aeschylus, structure of, 64, 98. Its celebrity, 101. Date, 114. Origin of the title, 114 (note), 398. Subject of, 115. Growth of the legend, 115. Depth of moral purpose, 116.
Orestes, the, of Euripides, realistic representation of madness in, 201. Nature of the plot, 241. The deus ex machina in, 245. Date and unequal character of, 309. Its popularity on the stage, 310. Substitution of commus for parodus in, 354.
Orphic Societies, 86. Doctrines of, 95, 174.
Οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον, 33, 34, 41.
Ovid, his Deianeira, 189.

P.

Pacuvius, 455.
Παλαιὰ τραγῳδία, 24, 447.
Παλαιοὶ τραγῳδοί, 420.
Palamedes, the, of Euripides, 183 (note).
Pan, connexion with Dionysus, 8.
Pantomimes, popularity of in late times, 459.
Παραχορηγήματα, 107, 109.
Parodus, the, in the Ajax and Antigone, 181. Definition of, 354. Varied character of, 354. Connexion with the anapaestic rhythm, 355, 391. Occasionally replaced by commi, 355.
Parthenopaeus, the, of Astydamas, 430.

Pausanias, friend of Agathon, 409.
Peiraeus, new tragedies at, 208. Cenotaph of Euripides at, 217.
Peirithous, the, of Euripides, Anaxagorean passage in, 270 (note), 417 (note).
Performances, of Greek tragedy, at Dionysiac festivals, 435. At other religious gatherings, 436. On secular occasions, 438. Wide extension of, 438.
Pericles, his remark about Sophocles, 130. Opinion of Ion concerning, 406.
Periods, in lyric poetry, 386.
Persae, the, of Aeschylus, performed at Syracuse, 55. Structure of, 63. Skilful arrangement of the plot, 72. Disregard of probability, 75. Not part of a tetralogy, 97, 103 (note). Celebrity of, 101. Date, 103. Purpose of, 104. Idealism of the treatment, 105. Local colouring, 106.
Phallic songs, 13.
Φαλλοφόροι, 13.
Phallus, the, its connexion with the Dionysiac worship, 6, 8.
Pherecydes, 87.
Philemon, his admiration for Euripides, 318.
Philip, of Macedon, performances of tragedy at his daughter's marriage, 438. Assassination of, 450.
Philippides, his Lover of Euripides, 320.
Philiscus, 441.
Philocles, defeats Sophocles, 129. His dramatic career, 413.
Philoctetes, the, of Aeschylus, improbability of the plot, 74. Its connexion with the Lemnians, 99. Character of, 195.
Philoctetes, the, of Euripides, 195.
Philoctetes, the, of Sophocles, the deus ex machina in, 149. Character of Philoctetes, 159, 196. Celebrity of, 180. Date, 180. Early form of the legend, 195. Treatment of the legend by Aeschylus and Euripides, 195. The innovations of Sophocles, 196, 331. Skilful handling of the incidents, 197. Supposed political significance, 197. Substitution of commus for stasimon, 358.
Philoctetes, the, of Theodectes, 426.
Philostratus, 447.
Philoxenus, his dithyrambs, 19. His reply to Dionysius, 433.
Phineus, the, of Aeschylus, 103 (note).
Phoenissae, the, of Euripides, episodic nature of the plot, 242. Irrelevance of the choral odes, 253. Compared with the Septem, 255. Date and character of, 310. Title of, 399.
Phoenissae, the, of Phrynichus, 44.
Phrygian music, in the dithyramb, 14, 18.
Phrynichus, the actor, 43 (note).
Phrynichus, the comic poet, his allusions to Sophocles, 133, 134, 136, 161. Confused with the tragic poet, 43 (note).
Phrynichus, the dancer, 43 (note).
Phrynichus, the general, 43 (note).
Phrynichus, the tragic poet, son of Melanthas, 43 (note).
Phrynichus, the tragic poet, son of Polyphradmon, his career, 42. Confusion with others of the same name, 43 (note), 182. Titles of his plays, 43 (note). Historical plays of, 44. Improvements in tragedy, 45. Phoenissae, 72. Alcestis, 288. Called a 'dancer,' 356.
Pindar, his tragedies, 24. Residence at Syracuse, 53. His version of Clytaemnestra's crime, 116. Division of his lyrics into cola, 387.
Pisistratus, connexion with Thespis, 36, 37. Patronises the drama, 37.
Plato, the comic poet, on the degeneracy of the chorus, 356.
Plato, the philosopher, his opinion of Euripides, 318. Tetralogy by, 470.
Plautus, his prologues and epilogues, 352.
Pleiad, the, 441.
Plots, originally confined to Dionysiac legends, 16. Extended to other fables by Thespis, 34. Character of the Thespian plot, 34. Taken from history by Phrynichus, 44. The Aeschylean plots, 70. The Sophoclean plots, 143. The Orestean legend as

treated by ancient and modern poets, 145. Unity and plausibility of the action in Sophocles, 148. The legend of Philoctetes as treated by the three dramatists, 195. The Euripidean plots, 238. Source of the modern plot, 242. Unity of action often disregarded by Euripides, 242, 292, 295, 296, 297, 311. The three unities, 337. Absence of the element of curiosity in the ancient plot, 344. The fatalistic plot, 346. Difference of taste between ancients and moderns, 347.

Polemon, his opinion of Sophocles, 201.

Politics, seldom referred to in ancient tragedy, 53. Rivalry of Themistocles and Aristeides, 54. Opinions of Aeschylus on the growth of Athenian power, 54; on tyranny, 55; on democracy, 55; on the Areopagus, 56, 119 (note); on the treaty with Argos, 57. Connexion of Sophocles with public affairs, 129. No political allusions in his plays, 130, 197. Opinions of Euripides on political life, 212; on tyranny and democracy, 274. Allusions to politics in his plays, 275.

Polus, the actor, 180 (note).

Polyphradmon, 412.

Portraits, of Aeschylus, 59. Of Sophocles, 137. Of Euripides, 214.

Pratinas, invents the satyric drama, 40. His career, 42. Excellence as a lyric poet, 42.

Praxiteles, his statue of Dionysus, 12.

Preservation, the, of Greek tragedies, due to the grammarians, 99. Of the plays of Aeschylus, 101; of Sophocles, 179; of Euripides, 227, 280.

Prodicus, friend of Euripides, 207. Teacher of Agathon, 411.

Προεισάγειν σατύρους, 41.

Prologue, the, invented by Thespis, 31, 248 (note), 350. In Euripides, 247. Various theories as to the Euripidean prologue, 249. The first scene called a 'prologue,' 350. Different forms of, 351. The prologue in the later drama, 352.

Prometheus Bound, the, of Aeschylus, its general tone, 55. Structure, 64, 113. Ethical impressiveness, 67. Boldness of conception in, 75. Character of Prometheus, 77. Celebrity among the ancients, 101. Date, 109. Forms part of a trilogy, 110. Difficulty of, 111. Views as to its motive, 113. Modern imitations, 114. Copied by Sophocles, 144. Commencement of, 351. Parodus in, 355. Metre of the opening scene, 381.

Prometheus, the Fire-Bringer, of Aeschylus, 110.

Prometheus, the Fire-Burner, of Aeschylus, 97, 103.

Prometheus Unbound, the, of Aeschylus, 110, 351.

Protagoras, a friend of Euripides, 207.

Proteus, the, of Aeschylus, 115.

Ptolemy, the first, 439.

Ptolemy, the second, his encouragement of art and literature, 440.

Ptolemy, the fourth, 443.

Ptolemy, the seventh, 443.

Pythagoras, 86.

Q.

Quintilian, his criticisms of Aeschylus, 125.

R.

Racine, observation of, 105. Admiration for Euripides, 232. His Phèdre, 240.

Realism, in Euripides, 218. A natural development in Greek tragedy, 227. Not carried to excess by Euripides, 228. Exhibition of horrors on the stage, 325.

Recitative, mostly employed in the anapaestic metre, 374.

Religion, connexion with the drama, 4. Religious tone of the Aeschylean drama, 66, 86. Spiritual character of the sixth century, 87. Religious opinions of Aeschylus, 87. His attitude towards the mythology, 88. The religious element in Sophocles, 168. His treatment of the mythology, 169. More secular tone of the Euripidean

drama, 225, 231. Attitude of Euripides towards the national belief, 261. His religious views, 269. The Bacchae, 313. Moral depth of Greek tragedy, 323.
Representation, manner of, improved by Aeschylus, 67; by Sophocles, 142. Varied character of, 327.
Reproduction, the, of plays of Aeschylus at Athens, 59, 413. Of plays of other poets at Athens, 420. Of plays in general, 448. Confined from the first to the works of the three great poets, 448. Latterly confined in the main to Euripides, 449. Representation of parts of plays, 450.
Revenge, opinion of Euripides concerning, 278.
Ῥαψῳδία, 427.
Rhapsodists, their manner of recital, 32.
Rhegium, Greek tragedy at, 454.
Ῥῆσις, 31.
Rhesus, the, of Euripides, no prologue in, 248. Question of its authenticity, 284. Character of the play, 285.
Rhetoric, in Sophocles, 167, 188. In Euripides, 235. In the later tragedy, 423.
Roman drama, the, borrowed from Greece, 3. Satyric plays neglected by the Romans, 395. The chorus in Roman tragedy, 453.
Rome, performances of Greek tragedy at, 455.
Rural Dionysia, 8.

S.

Salamis, connexion of Euripides with, 205 (note), 213.
Samos, Athenian expedition to, 182.
Σάτυροι, name for satyric plays, 389.
Satyric drama, the, invented by Pratinas, 44. Excellence of Choerilus in, 40. Satyric plays of Euripides, 209. The Alcestis partially satyric, 286. The Cyclops, 317. Form and character of the satyric drama, 390. Decline of its popularity, 394. Character in later times, 395. Excellence of Aeschylus and Achaeus in, 408. Reforms of Sositheus, 442.
Satyrs, the, character of, 7. In the dithyramb, 15. In satyric plays, 41, 317, 389, 394.
Σαυτὴν ἐπαινεῖς, 430.
Scenery, the, invention of, 68, 142. More elaborate in the later plays of Aeschylus, 69.
Schlegel, his attacks on Euripides, 226. Opinion of Goethe concerning, 233. His theory about the Euripidean prologue, 250.
Scholia, the, on Greek tragedies, 100 (note), 179 (note).
Scopelianus, 447.
Semachidae, worship of Dionysus at, 27.
Σεμναὶ θεαί, 120.
Seneca, his picture of Deianeira, 189.
Septem, the, of Aeschylus, structure of, 63, 108. Impressiveness of the dances in, 70. Celebrity of, 101. Date, 106. Part of a trilogy, 106. Termination of, 107. Martial character of, 108. Title of, 397, 398.
Serapieia, the, 436.
Shakespeare, his Winter's Tale, 288. Moral significance of his plays, 324. His character-drawing, 336. Changes of scene in, 341. Tranquil close of his scenes, 341. His versification, 374. Combination of prose and verse, 377.
Shelley, his criticism on Paradise Lost, 113. His Prometheus, 114.
Shirley, his versification, 374.
Sicily, visited by Aeschylus, 50. Popularity of Euripides in, 318.
Σίκιννις, 391.
Sileni, followers of Dionysus, 7, 8. In satyric plays, 389.
Simonides, his 'tragedies,' 24. Elegy on Marathon, 49. Residence at Syracuse, 53. Division of his lyrics into cola, 387.
Sisyphus, the, of Aeschylus, 99.
Σκηνή, 29.
Slavery, opinions of Euripides on, 277.
Socrates, friend of Euripides, 207. Influence on Euripides, 207 (note). Views compared with those of Euripides, 277.
Solon, his opinion about Thespis, 37.

Sophocles, imitates Phrynichus, 45. His criticism on Aeschylus, 73. Birth and parentage, 126. Education, 127. First appearance as a dramatist, 128. Dramatic career, 128. Number of plays, 129. Connexion with public affairs, 129. Religious offices, 131. Family, 132. Supposed prosecution by Iophon, 133. Character, 134. Death, 136. Portraits, 137. Improvements in the structure of tragedy, 138. Abandons the trilogy, 140. Changes in the tone of tragedy, 141; in the manner of representation, 142. Choice of subjects, 143. Construction of plots, 144. Unity of action in, 148. Plausibility of his plots, 149. Narrative speeches, 150. Spectacular effects, 151. Character of the Sophoclean chorus, 151; its double functions, 153; its share in the action, 155. The characters in Sophocles, 156; ideal, 157; varied in type, 158. His diction, 161; its intricacy, 163; difficulty, 165. Coinage of new words, 166. Metaphors, 167. Rhetoric, 168. Religious ideas, 168. Attitude towards the mythology, 169. Opinions concerning divine government, 170. Supposed pessimism, 173. Belief in immortality, 174. Irony, 174. The extant plays, 179. Their chronological order, 180. Antigone, 182. Ajax, 186. Trachiniae, 188. Electra, 191. Oedipus Tyrannus, 192. Philoctetes, 194. Oedipus Coloneus, 198. Reputation, 200. Imitations of Homer, 202. Occasional bathos, 185 (note). The most perfect representative of Greek tragedy, 328. His prologues, 351. Treatment of the commus, 361. Paucity of stage lyrics in, 362. Use of the trochaic tetrameter, 370. Treatment of the iambic, 373. Lyrical metres, 376. Tragic poets among his descendants, 414, 445. His plays seldom reproduced in later times, 448.

Sophocles, the younger, 429.

Sophocles, tragic poet of the second century, 445.

Sositheus, his satyric plays, 395. His career, 442.

Soteria, the, at Acraephiae, 436. A Delphi, 436, 452.

Spain, Greek tragedy in, 439.

Sparta, Athenian animosity against, 188, 229, 298.

Spectacular effects, in Aeschylus, 69, 73. In Sophocles, 151. In Euripides, 244. In Greek tragedy generally, 327.

Sphinx, the, of Aeschylus, 106, 393.

Stage, the, its use in the dithyramb, 20. Extended by Thespis, 30; by Aeschylus, 68. Reserved for the actors, 348, 453.

Stage lyrics, 362. Metrical structure of, 380.

Stasima, meaning of the name, 356. Aristotle's definition of, 356 (note). Dances in, 357. How sung, 358. Occasionally replaced by commi, 358.

Statues, of Aeschylus, 59, 431 (note). Of Sophocles, 137. Of Euripides, 214. Of Astydamas, 430.

Stesichorus, his Oresteia, 115.

Sthenelus, 418.

Stichomythia, the, 381.

Structure, the, of tragedy, in the plays of Thespis, 31. Improved by Aeschylus, 61; by Sophocles, 138. Innovations of Euripides, 245. Lucid and simple character of, 324. The three unities, 337. Symmetry of Greek tragedy, 377. Agathon's innovations, 411. Structure of the later tragedy, 424.

Subjectivity of treatment in Euripides, 234.

Subjects, the, of Greek tragedy, originally Dionysiac, 16. Extended by Thespis, 34; by Phrynichus, 44. In Aeschylus, 70. In Sophocles, 143. In Euripides, 238. Mainly mythological, 328. Repetitions, 330. Moral significance of, 332. Dignified in character, 332. Fictitious subjects in Agathon, 410. Monotony of in the later tragedy, 422. Historical dramas in the fourth century, 422; in later times (Appendix II).

Suidas, confusions in, 140 (note), 425 (note), 465, 466, 469.
Supplices, the, of Aeschylus, its primitive structure, 34, 62. Analysis of the plot, 35. Democratic tone of, 55. Date and position in the trilogy, 101. Depth of purpose, 102. Commencement of, 351. Termination of, 352. Parodus in, 355.
Supplices, the, of Euripides, speech of Theseus in, 234. Spectacular character of, 244. The chorus, 256. Moral tone of, 266. Political allusions in, 276, 296. Date, 296. Episodic nature of the plot, 296. The parodus, 354. Half-choruses in, 358. Commus in, 360.
Susarion, settles in Icaria, 27.
Syleus, the, of Euripides, 393.
Symmetry, characteristic of Greek art, 377. In tragedy, 378. In the choral odes, 378. In the commi, 378. In the stage lyrics, 380. In the dialogue, 381. The 'grosse responsion,' 384. Schmidt's Eurhythmy, 388.
Syracuse, the Persae performed at, 50.

T.

Τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς, 359, 361.
Τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἁμαξῶν, 30.
Tacitus, intricacy of his style, 163.
Tarentum, Greek tragedy at, 454.
Tauri, the, human sacrifices among, 306.
Tauropolus, epithet of Artemis, 306.
Telephus, the, of Aeschylus, 99.
Telephus, the, of Euripides, realism in, 220.
Telestes, dancer of Aeschylus, 109.
Terence, his prologues, 352.
Tetralogy, the, origin of, 96. How used by Aeschylus, 96. Instances of his tetralogies, 97. Form of, 98. Theories concerning, 98. Sometimes abandoned by Aeschylus, 99. Abandoned entirely by Sophocles, 140. Unsuited to the classic taste, 342. Names of tetralogies, 398. The Pandionis of Philocles, 414. The Lycurgeia of Polyphradmon, 412. The Oedipodeia of Meletus, 417. A tetralogy composed by Plato, see Appendix I.
Thales, 87.
Theatre, the, at Athens, 48, 51. Large number of theatres in the ancient world, 439 (note).
Themistocles, his rivalry with Aristeides, 54.
Theodectes, life of, 424. Dramatic works, 425.
Theologeion, the, invented by Aeschylus, 69.
Theoris, mistress of Sophocles, 132.
Thespis, born at Icaria, 26. Introduces a single actor, 27. Inventor of the tragic dialogue, 28. Acts in person, 29. Introduces tragic masks, 29; stage and background, 30. Description of in Horace, 30. Structure of his plays, 31, 350. Indebtedness to Epic poetry, 32. Subjects of his dramas, 33. Connexion with Pisistratus, 36. First performances at Athens, 37. Conversation with Solon, 37. Takes part in the first tragic contest, 37. Death, 38. His prologues, 248 (note). Called a 'dancer,' 356. Spurious plays of, 428.
Thracian Captives, the, of Aeschylus, 187.
Θρίαμβος, 16.
Tigranocerta, Greek tragedy at, 439.
Timaeus, his error as to the death of Euripides, 204 (note).
Timanthes, his representation of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, 316.
Timon, 447.
Titles of Greek tragedies, 395. Mostly taken from the chorus or from the leading character, 396. Antiquity of, 397. Names of tetralogies, 398. Confusion caused by, 398. Remedies proposed by the grammarians, 399. Incorrect quotations of, 401. Lists of, 402.
Tlepolemus, 443.
Trachiniae, the, of Sophocles, disregard of unity of time in, 150. The messenger in, 160. Tragic irony in, 198. Celebrity of, 180. Date, 180, 189.

Modern criticisms on, 188. Character of Deianeira, 189; of Hercules, 190. Relation to the Hercules Furens and Supplices of Euripides, 189. Structure of, 190.
Tragi-comedy, invented by Euripides, 223.
Τραγικὸς τρόπος, 22.
Τραγῳδία, origin of the word, 22.
Τραγῳδός, 447.
Trilogy, see Tetralogy.
Triptolemus, the, of Sophocles, 144.
Troades, the, of Euripides, character of Helen in, 219. Rhetoric in, 236. Episodic nature of the plot, 242. Date and general character, 300.
Trochaic tetrameter, in the dithyramb, 20. In Thespis, 32. Revived by Euripides, 283. In the Iphigeneia in Aulide, 315. Employment of by the poets of the fifth century, 371.
Trullo, the Council of, abolishes theatrical performances, 461.
Τυρβασία, 14.
Tynnichus, his paean, 57.

U.

Unity, the, of action in Aeschylus, 72. Of time in Aeschylus, 75. Of action in Sophocles, 148. Of time in the Trachiniae, 189. Of action in Euripides, 239, 242. Of time in Euripides, 243. Of action in Greek tragedy, 338. Of time in Greek tragedy, 339. Of place in Greek tragedy, 340. Ancient observance of the unities due partly to the chorus, 341; mainly to the tendency of classical taste, 342. The unities on the modern stage, 343.
Ὑποκριτής, 27, 447.

V.

Virgil, character of Aeneas in, 112. Intricacy of his style, 163, 164. Reference to Sophocles, 202.
Vitruvius, his description of the Greek theatre, 453.
Voltaire, his Oreste, 147. His Oedipe, 150, 159, 339. His theory concerning the dignity of tragedy.

W.

Waggons, said to have been used by Thespis, 30.
Wine-lees, said to have been used by Thespis, 30.
Women, views of Euripides concerning, 278.
Women of Aetna, the, of Aeschylus, 50.

X.

Xenocles, the elder, 415.
Xenocles, the younger, 432.
Xenophanes, 87.
Xenophon, his opinion of Sophocles, 201.

Z.

Zeus, conception of in Aeschylus, 87. His name, 89. Relation to the earth deities, 91. In the Prometheus, 111. Conception of in Sophocles, 170. His conduct censured in the Hercules Furens, 263. Conception of in Euripides, 270 (notes).

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